COUNTRY LIFE

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LADY ALEXANDRA ACHESON.

COUNTRY LIFE

THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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FRIENDS OR FOES.

ON Monday night the Rev. Henry S. Slater, Rector of Thornhaugh, Northants, delivered to the farmers assembled at the Hotel Metropole a very practical and useful address. Its title was "Wild Birds and the Farm." He treated the subject with equal sympathy for the unfortunate agriculturist and the naturalist who loves birds, and is always inclined to say "hang the expense." Bringing the question down to statistics, Mr. Slater drew attention to the fact that the British list of birds contains the names of about 250 species, resident or migrant. Of these about eighty are fairly entitled to be called familiars of the farm, as they live in the vicinity of agricultural land, if not for the whole of the year, at least for a part of it. He deducted thirty species as living exclusively upon insect food, and there is no question about their presence being beneficial. Thus the question was brought within narrow compass and could be discussed without sentiment and without cruelty. It is perfectly certain that quite a number of birds suffer for sins they do not commit. Mr. Slater took the kestrel as a very notorious instance. The windhover may be described as the most picturesque of our wild birds. Others may be, and are, more beautiful in plumage, but anyone who likes to watch the real poetry of motion will always be delighted to see this bird "climbing the air," or hovering over its prey. Its food has been ascertained to be for the greater part mice and beetles; but the kestrel is not always credited with good intention. We have heard the keeper declare in round terms that he had actually seen kestrels hovering over the pheasant coops during the breeding season, and carrying off small poults. No one who has studied the habits of the bird will deny that this is possible, because occasionally any hawk or falcon will depart from its usual habits. But that is a very different matter from saying, as is often done, that young birds form its chief article of diet. The kestrel may indeed be described as practically harmless, and not only that, but it is of very great assistance to agriculture by keeping down the mice. Mr. Slater classified it in this respect with the owls and weasels. It was unnecessary to sing the praises of owls, because the farmers freely acknowledge them. Indeed, many keep them in their barns as carefully as they do cats in the house, and for the same reason; and there was practical sense in the suggestion that any farmer found guilty of killing an owl should be fined to the extent of £5: he is injuring himself and his own friends. Although the weasel is not to be classified as a bird, we are glad that the lecturer had a word to say in its favour. No one would attempt to argue that the weasel is a harmless animal, as he will slay and destroy anything he comes across. He will climb up into a nest, suck the eggs, kill the young birds, and, if he gets a chance, mete out the same fate to their parents. To some extent he hunts the rabbit, and occasionally kills the young. But when all that is said, it still has to be remembered that the staple food of the weasel is made up of mice, and his time is largely employed in hunting and killing these destructive vermin. Were it not for the kestrel, the owl, and the weasel, mice would soon become as great a pest in Great Britain as the rabbits are in Australia.

For the sparrow Mr. Slater had nothing favourable to say. He classified it with the rat, house mouse, flea, and bacteria of typhoid, which he described as "punishments for human negligence." He would not even allow that it was, properly speaking, a wild bird. It is a parasite of man, which does not seem able to exist except in the neighbourhood of a dwelling. In the harvest season it would almost seem as though thousands of these creatures migrated from towns to visit the cornfields, which they simply devastate. Mr. Slater described a starling as one of the most useful birds from the agricultural and horticultural points of view, but the increase of this species is one of the most extraordinary that has ever been known in natural history. There are ancient rustics still alive who remember when the starling was, comparatively speaking, a rare bird. It was regarded as something wonderful to find a nest, and often the young were taught to speak. There is, in fact, an old legendary proverb still in existence that says a starling will talk if you slit his tongue with a silver sixpence. It is certain that long ago country people had a superstitious belief that something of this kind was necessary before the bird could speak. We refer to it here, however, only to illustrate the fact that seventy or eighty years ago the starlings did not exist in anything like the numbers to which they have now attained. They may, on a winter afternoon, be seen flying across the country in numbers uncountable, and stretched like some great cloud over the landscape. The practical danger that arises from this is that they may change their habits and diet. Even now starlings have been seen to clear a cherry tree of its fruit in a very short space of time, and one can only hope that this taste will not develop.

But we have seen something of the kind happen in the case of the rook. Anyone who attentively observes a rookery will discover that there are egg-eating families among the birds. Some of the parents never seem to bring any eggs home to their offspring whatever, others carry little else. On the farm they may be often watched quartering the fields for nests and partridges just like sporting dogs, and they will even haunt the farmyard and the poultry run for what they can pick up there. Mr. Slater is perfectly right in dismissing the carrion crows as being too few in number to do any real harm. This would hold still more true of the raven. It is much to be regretted that this solemn and stately bird is disappearing from our British ornithology. From the number of raven trees, raven crags, raven scars, and so forth, it is quite evident that it must have been extremely common once upon a time. But, like the chough and the kite, it, for no intelligible reason, has dwindled away till the finding of a nest has become an event worthy of being specially chronicled. We believe the majority of farmers would gladly spare this bird for the sake of its old associations. Indeed, very few of them can have the opportunity of either killing or sparing the raven. Of the tribe of pigeons Mr. Slater ruthlessly condemned the greedy and multiplying cushat. Those which do most harm probably come from Norway in the autumn. They are smaller than our English-bred birds, but it is doubtful if their consumption is not on a greater scale. The rock-pigeon must be classed among the diminishing species. Few of the birds that nest in the cliffs are genuine rock-pigeons, the majority being strays from the farm and house. The stock-dove again is much less numerous than the wood-pigeon, and it is also a greater friend of the farmer, since it is more addicted to eating the seeds of noxious weeds. On the whole, then, Mr. Slater advocated the cause of our feathered friends, and he reminded the farmers that the ancients when they wished to invent a word that would properly describe the opening to hell, called it Avernus, which, translated, means birdless.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Alexandra Acheson, the eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Gosford. Lady Alexandra is engaged to Captain the Hon. F. W. Stanley of the 10th Hussars, the youngest son of the Earl and Countess of Derby.



ACCORDING to the latest rumours which come to us from Russia, the Czar has not yet learned the lesson which he might have been expected to have received from the war. It is said that at the last Council held, he announced that it should be carried to a finish at all costs; but surely this is the resolution of a feeble-minded and perverse monarch. It would be very much braver and more manly of him to bring these proceedings to an immediate conclusion. It would, perhaps, be an exaggeration to say that never in the history of the world has there been such a frightful expenditure of blood and money as is shown in the account recently drawn up of the casualties, but certainly nothing like it has previously been recorded in history. The mythical armies of antiquity were not numbered with the accuracy and care bestowed on modern troops, nor were the killed and wounded numerated as they are in our day. But it is practically certain the worst slaughter in the worst battles of the olden time could not compare with that which has taken place in Manchuria.

It is difficult to know exactly what is meant by those who are agitating for the establishment of the new Ministry of Commerce and Labour. The Board of Trade is already that, and it is very intelligible indeed that steps should be taken to urge its reorganisation. New duties have been thrust upon it, until it has become the most unwieldy of all the Government departments. Still, it is entitled to the credit of having done excellent work, and the Labour Department which it established a few years ago is very efficiently managed. It has at least collected information and issued statistics that were not previously available, while the monthly report on the state of employment gives a trustworthy guide to the condition of trade and commerce where previously we were left to surmise and conjecture. The inspectorate connected with the Board of Trade is also fairly efficient, though capable of great improvement. Indeed, were it not for enlarging the functions of the department, it would be a good thing to abolish most of the rural surveyors and inspectors and substitute men from the centre, as it is notorious that undue influence is very often exercised over the local men. Still, reform is one thing, a complete change is another; though, as far as we can see, it is the name much more than the character of the institution that the reformers are anxious about.

It is to be hoped that the last word has now been said on the North Sea affair, since the Board of Trade Commissioners have issued a report describing it in the most uncompromising language. They say that British trawlers were peacefully engaged in their lawful calling at a spot out of the way of ships passing between the Skaw and the Straits of Dover. No one in the employ of any foreign Government was with them, nor did they possess at the time any article of war. "These trawlers," in the words of the report, "were, without warning or provocation, fired upon by several men-of-war." The sums claimed by the fishermen amounted to £103,830, but the Commissioners reduced this to £60,023. The claims for wounds by gun-fire were cut down from £17,472 to £6,700, and those for saving life and property from £2,500 to £650. The latter is a piece of useful information, as a great many people were surprised by the fact that the British Government voluntarily reduced the amount paid by Russia, but its assessment is an act of justice, without which the English character would not have retained its well-earned claim for fairness.

The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce has shown a good example to similar bodies throughout the country by taking active measures to impress upon the world at large the economical folly we are guilty of in neglecting our waterways. For purposes of trade it is beyond question that canal traffic can be cheaply and usefully carried. We know very well that in a vast number of cases there is not the slightest need for hurry. For example, in the conveyance of such farm produce as cereals and roots, or in the carrying of building materials and goods of a kindred description, the canal boat is as good as the train, and costs only a fraction of what the latter does. Yet it is strange that when a canal was put up to auction a few months ago it did not find a single bidder, although the possibilities of development have frequently been discussed and are perfectly obvious. What is required is that one of the great municipalities should take the matter in hand and work it out practically. No amount of speeches or lecturing could possibly have the same effect as a single practical lesson of this kind.

We are glad to see that Professor Beresford Pite has been directing attention to the ugliness of London buildings. It is very singular that the County Council, which is always seeking for new fields of activity, has never turned its attention to this matter. In some towns, notably in Edinburgh, a builder is prohibited from erecting any house that is not in keeping with the rest of the street. In London it is not so. We see cases to the contrary happening every day. For example, in the new Gaiety Theatre, Mr. Norman Shaw has laid out a building of very striking character and individuality, but there is nothing whatever to prevent someone else in the immediate neighbourhood from building an ordinary sky-scraping hotel after the style of the Americans. And in other parts of London this is actually taking place. There is no attempt at uniformity. If the County Council is satisfied that certain elementary regulations as to sanitation and safety have been complied with, people may make their building as ugly and as much out of keeping with the rest as they choose.

THE UNFORESEEN.

How could I dream a day would ever dawn,
How could I dream the day would dawn, indeed,
When daffodils should glisten on the lawn,
And I not heed?

How strange it seems to think I never knew,
That one day Spring's first breath would thrill the air,
Brown furrows shine beneath the rain-washed blue,
And I not care.

How could I tell a long-remembered voice
Might stir grey sorrow from her wintry sleep?
I did not dream the song-thrush would rejoice,
And I but weep.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON.

In commenting on Sir William Chance's remarks on cheap cottages at Guildford last week, a contemporary falls into a very natural and popular mistake, and asks, "Why does the labourer's cottage stand him in a rent which for his income is so high?" Now this is exactly what the labourer's cottage does not do; he gets it for a nominal rent of from 1s. to 2s. in many agricultural districts, and it is the landlord who has to stand the loss of the interest on his capital. He consequently only builds for his own estate, and the labourer who does not work for a landowner does not pay more as a rule, but simply cannot get a cottage at any price, not because the rent is prohibitive, but because there are not any, most of those owned by labourers for so many lives having been given up for a price before the term is up, to avoid the expense of upkeep.

An excellent illustration of the value of the work performed for some years past by the Coal Smoke Abatement Society was given at its meeting held the other day by Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, who spoke of the great improvement which has been experienced in Kew Gardens since the society succeeded in securing the abatement of the smoke nuisance in Brentford, on the other side of the river. The pall of sooty vapour which defiles hundreds of square miles of this kingdom is no less harmful to the human organism than to vegetation, and is as certain in the long run to produce a degenerating effect on the mental and moral as on the physical side of the life of any population affected by it. The difficulty experienced by the society, and by all persons who have interested themselves in abating the same nuisance, is mainly in inducing local governing bodies to put in force the powers of suppression already provided by law. These powers are by no means of a tyrannous character, or inimical to industry and manufacture, and it is most desirable that more attention should be paid to the purification of the atmosphere from smoke defilement than is at present at all commonly the case over the country as a whole.

In the House of Commons on Monday night there was a battle royal on a question which we may touch on here because it has nothing to do with politics. It was whether or no it would be advisable to run electric tramcars over the bridges in London. At present a considerable amount of inconvenience is felt by the fact that they stop short, so that the majority of the passengers are compelled either to finish their journey

on foot, or to make a little one that is to the other what an appendix is to a book. The division resulted in a dead heat, 171 voting either way; but the real truth of the matter was that the heat was engendered not so much on account of the bridge, but because the Embankment was in danger. The proposal to run electric cars along it is one to which many people have a very decided objection. They regard the Embankment, not without reason, as a relief to the crowded traffic of Fleet Street, and certainly if the tramway line was placed along it, from Charing Cross to Ludgate Hill the roadway would be practically impassable at a late hour of the evening. A minor consideration, perhaps, is that the Embankment is almost the pleasantest bit of London for the pedestrian at present, and it would be entirely spoiled if electric cars were allowed to pass and repass.

The news of the death of Mr. William Paul, F.L.S., the famous rosarian of Waltham Cross, will occasion widespread regret. He was one of the old school of horticulturists, and throughout a long and busy life endeavoured to the utmost to advance the aims of good gardening. Though the raising and growing of roses was the chief business of his long life of eighty-two years, his many books show that he had considerable knowledge of fruit trees, hollyhocks, and other flowers, which in his day were in their infancy, but are now in every good garden in the land. Among the more beautiful of the roses raised at Waltham Cross were Corinna, Corallina, Sulphurea, Clio, and Queen Mab. "The Rose Garden," perhaps the best known of his works, has passed through several editions, and the last was only issued a few months ago. Few men were more widely known than Mr. Paul, and his name is perpetuated in the beautiful roses he raised with such consummate skill.

Mr. E. N. Buxton has been so frequent a contributor to COUNTRY LIFE, and writes so well on all the various topics in which COUNTRY LIFE tries to interest its readers, that the latter will hear with peculiar sympathy of his misfortune in slipping up on the ice in Canada, and breaking a rib. His daughter was able to assure the Essex Education Committee, of which he is chairman, that there is nothing seriously amiss; but it is a painful accident, and one that will prevent him from carrying out his arranged programme of visits.

Dogs, when not in danger of their one disease that menaces human life, namely, rabies, have a large credit account yearly in their dealings with man. Lately we learned that one of the St. Bernard dogs at the Hospice saved two lives on one snowy night on the top of the pass, and has altogether nine rescues to his credit. From a place much nearer home, Portadown, the news comes that a hay-cutter was buried by the fall of a stack, which also overwhelmed his terrier dog. The dog managed to wriggle out after some hours, and then by its whining and barking conveyed to other people the fact that its master was under the stack. He was also released alive. We almost incline to the belief that there are no bad dogs, except those whose education has been neglected by inferior human beings.

Geology has not often had its truths so eloquently supported as they were by an occurrence at Calais the other day. There have been some very low tides recently, and they show that the floor of the sea consists there of an immense submerged forest, which apparently extends across the Bay from Cape Blancnez to Cape Grisnez. This would be entirely in keeping with the theory that at one time the British Islands were part of the Continent of Europe, which, indeed, must have been a great block of land destitute of all the seas, straits, and channels that now break up and diversify it. Such an idea is, of course, in perfect harmony with the nebular hypothesis, according to which water could not have existed at all until the process of cooling had reached a certain point. But when we think of the extraordinary vegetation that seems to have covered the world in those days, and that now serve as coal-mines, we would fain go farther back and find out if we could at what precise period of cooling the consciousness that we call life first made its appearance. No other question connected with science is so interesting as this, but it has been asked in vain of an oracle that ever has been, and is likely ever to be, dumb.

It would be interesting to hear what the experts say about the migration of plaice after what has recently occurred. It is known to our readers that under the superintendence of Mr. Meek a number of marked fish were set free on the Northumbrian coast some nine or ten months ago. Some of these have recently been caught and identified, but the captures have all taken place on the Northumbrian coast, a few of them in the very piece of water in which they were liberated at Seahouses. Thus it would appear to be certain, as far as one can be sure of anything that happens under several feet of water, that plaice do not go on a regular migration, but potter about in the same neighbourhood for a great length of time. Probably there are migratory fish, as there are migratory birds. The herring and the salmon are noted for their wandering, but some species may, again, like the birds, be migratory only to a small degree. The mere fact, for instance, that robins occasionally cross the Channel would scarcely be sufficient to earn for this bird the title of migrant. Plaice may change their quarters under certain conditions, but if, generally speaking, they keep in the same neighbourhood, the task of replenishing the supply will be greatly simplified.

It is the fashion among many hard-riding men, and especially those who pay flying visits to provincial packs, to speak contemptuously of the hours spent in "digging out." The "Lord Alvauley" school will always murmur thus, but the Master fortunately knows his business, and recognises the obligations he is under to his hounds, the landowner, and the farmer. Hounds who are persistently denied blood when foxes go to ground end by refusing to mark them there, so at the beginning of each season all superfluous cubs should be resolutely hunted to the death for the sake of the young entry, and towards the end the same measure should be meted out to a good many vixens. To leave too many of these in a covert means dissatisfaction among game preservers and farmers, however keen they are on hounds, for they know that besides increased havoc wrought among game and poultry, the crowds of cubs next year will only ruin sport.

THE MISSEL-THRUSH.

He singeth sweet all through the day,
Though mad winds roughly seize his lay,
And toss it with a laugh and shout
Far up the blue—the rabble rout!—
He only sings more loud and gay.

Those lazy boys—the blackbirds, stay
To pipe their luscious tune till May,
But e'er the bravest leaf peeps out
He singeth sweet.

At morn, and noon, and twilight grey
He sings on yonder naked spray,
Nor heeds one jot the winds' rude flout,
But gaily threads his roundabout
Of silver notes—"Spring's on its way!"
He singeth sweet.

CONSTANCE TRAVERS.

Of late years the finer qualities of amber have been rising so steadily in price, that it is not without interest to note that an extensive deposit of this beautiful substance has been discovered on the island of Santo Domingo. Curiously enough, the broken, disintegrated sandstone in which the amber is found is situated nearly 1,800ft. above the sea-level, at the top of a hill which is known as Palo Quemado, or the Burnt Port. Lovers of the exquisitely beautiful articles manufactured from this curious substance will be pleased to learn that this new find of amber possesses all the opalescent qualities of the best Roumanian and Catanian specimens. In far-distant ages amber was of enormous value, and mysterious qualities were attributed to it, while the source of its origin was completely unknown, some of the ancient fables representing it as the congealed tears of the sisters of Phaethon, whose continued weeping after his death so moved the pity of the gods that they turned them into poplar trees. It is now generally accepted that amber is actually the petrified or compressed resinous exudation from some extinct species of coniferous tree, and it is not unfrequently found in connection with beds of coal. Some of the largest pieces found have weighed as much as 12lb. or 13lb., but such specimens are very rare, and, as a rule, the average size of a piece of amber when found does not exceed that of a man's hand.

At every turn of the road the British traveller in France may find evidence that the *entente cordiale* between the two nations is a good deal more than an empty phrase, and the cordiality is the more apparent because it stands out in such strong contrast to the attitude of the average Frenchman towards the average Briton only a very few years ago. At that unfortunate time, when the Boer War was at its height, and especially when Great Britain's fortunes were at their depth, the Briton on the Continent was very apt to be greeted with cries of "*Vive les Boers*," or even "*A bas, les Anglais.*" All that has been changed now, with a swift mutability that perhaps is characteristic of the Gallic nation, and not in the highest circles only, but universally, the Briton is welcomed by the Gaul as a friend and a brother with a courtesy that is purely French. It is the more remarkable that this attitude should prevail for the moment, and the more significant of its reality, by reason of the strain to which the *entente* has been

subjected, owing to the unhappy war in the East between the two nations with whom Britain and Gaul are respectively allied. The strain has been greater for the latter than for the former, since the allies of France have been the losers throughout the campaign, and we are obliged to recognise, with gladness, the generous spirit of the French which enables them still to feel truly our friends in spite of all.

It is quite remarkable, considering how cold the winter has been in the South of France, that the number of hibernating butterflies and moths which have survived this cold, and have been warmed into new life by the first sunny days of spring, is considerably greater than the average. The most commonly represented kinds are the brimstones, tortoise-shells, and painted ladies, among the butterflies, while the humming-bird hawk-moth is also much in evidence. No doubt the causes which make for successful hibernation are complex, including immunity from carnivorous enemies, and absence of warm hours in the middle of winter days, which might lure out a hibernating insect to perish before it found a new place of shelter; and these are influences which might be the direct effect of a winter of unusual cold. But, on the whole, the fact that an abnormally cold winter should favour the hibernating insects, so that their numbers should be above the normal standard in the following spring, is certainly remarkable, and as certainly it is a sequence that has happened this year; and we can only look upon the two phenomena as being connected in the relation of cause and effect, even though the precise mode of the connection is hidden from us.

WOODLAND AND WAYSIDE POOLS.

"AS the day lengthens, the spring strengthens," says an old proverb, but there is another which at first sight seems contradictory of it; it is, that "the cuckoo dries up the mud." Soon the harbinger of spring will be heard in real earnest, pouring forth his monotonous note from copse and glade, and yet the water glittering and gleaming lies in clear shallow pools, in corners of fields, by the road-side, and in the depths of the woodland. So wonderfully pellucid does this water become after standing a while that, as is shown in one of our photographs, it mirrors in the purest definition the trees that grow beside or overhang it. A curious study in natural history is afforded by some of these collections of water, and even the idle looker-on, who does not himself take his science seriously, may learn many curious facts by watching others who have no more taste for investigation than he has himself. There is a class of men who earn such livelihood as is to be had from it by collecting frogs to sell to the Zoological Gardens, where they are used for the purpose of feeding reptiles. The outfit of a man of this kind is a long pole, at the end of which a bag-net is fixed, while on his back is a large sack for holding the proceeds of his day's fishing. On coming to a pool he, as it were, drags it with his net, and empties his catch out on the bank before you. In a little while the water will be all dried up, and during the height of summer a rank vegetation will take its place, so that it affords no enduring home to the regular aquatic creatures; but those that are amphibious revel in it during the months of spring. Hither come the frogs in spawning-time, and their croaking during the period of courtship is one of the sounds that break the stillness of the woodlands. They vary much in their habits with the neighbourhood in which they are found. Near the town, where they have been educated by the sticks and stones of cruel boys, they are shy as the trout and the water-rat. At the approach of a human visitor the hoarse voices suddenly become stilled, and the frogs themselves sink to the very floor of the pool; so that what a moment before was a scene of such life as made the water a collection of rippling circles, at once becomes silent and dead; the pool lies like a mirror, margined with the dry stalks of water plants that had become dried and withered during the winter and now whistle to the lightest breeze that passes over the pond. But if the observer will only remain silent and motionless for a few minutes, he will very soon behold them emerging once more from the depths,



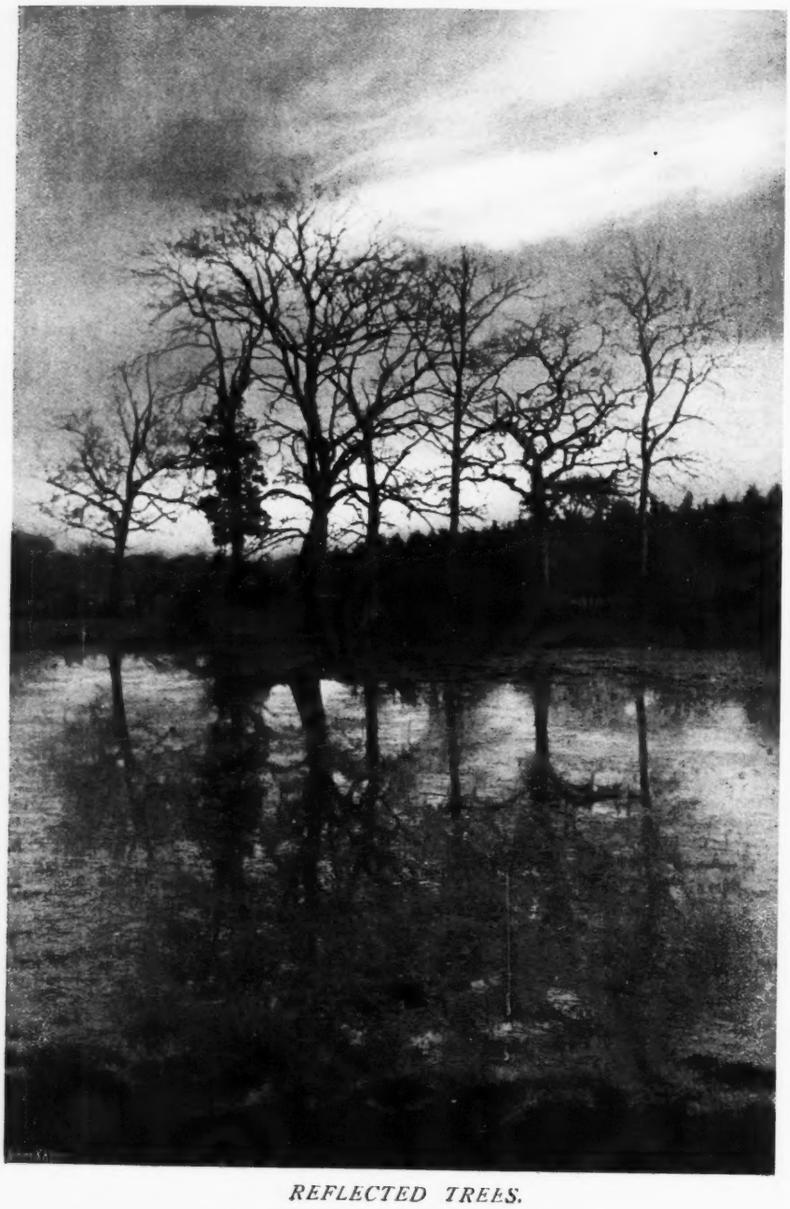
M. C. Cottam. *A WOODLAND POOL.* Copyright

with heads that remind one of Milton's "Pansies freaked with jet." In a little while the pond will become almost disgusting with the frogs' spawn floating in clusters, which again in its due time will give place to myriads of tadpoles. One would think there were enough to people a whole world with frogs. But Nature is at once wasteful and cruel in her methods, and the tiny frogs are destined to supply many a succulent meal to the ravenous snakes and birds that live on them.

Other creatures that begin to people this temporary water in April are the beautiful newts and efts. Rural superstition is much occupied with these harmless amphibians. It will have it that they are salamanders, and can be thrown into the fire without injury; but seldom is this statement put to the test. In spite of all the popular books that have been written, lessons given in schools, and the other helps to Nature teaching, it is firmly believed in the country that the newt is a poisonous creature whose bite is death; some say his sting, for they seldom take the trouble to find out what is truly the lethal weapon. The one enlightening force



"WHERE WINTER FLOODS STILL STAND."

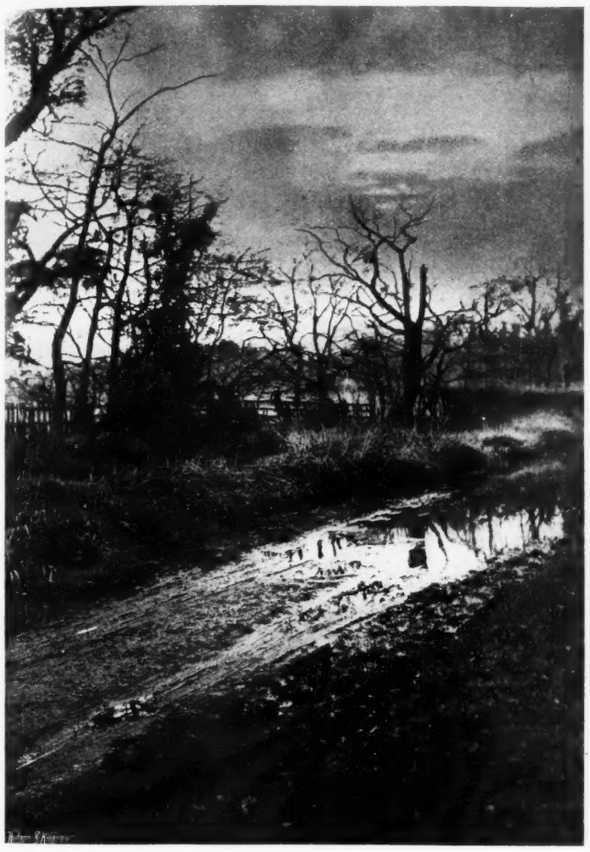


REFLECTED TREES.

is the modern schoolboy, who, with his rage for collecting and keeping things, has not omitted the newt from the sphere of his operations. It supplies all the excitement of fishing, without the necessity of obtaining expensive rods and fine lines. To catch a newt all that is necessary is to fasten a piece of worm to the end of a thread, which in its turn, being tied to a wand cut from the nearest thicket, is dropped into the pool. So vigorously does the eft take hold, or so reluctant is it to give up its prey, that a sharp tug the moment it bites will land it securely on the grass, where the brilliant colouring of its belly may be admired at leisure. Why Nature has given it those exquisite hues is as much a puzzle as the reason for the equally gorgeous colouring on the hawk-moths that fly by night over the tall poplars, and as far as we can see have no suitable opportunity for displaying their finery. Of the leeches and beetles, the water-spiders and other aquatic small fry, one would fain leave the microscopist to speak. They may be looked on with a curious eye by anyone who watches the frog-catcher at work, and students of minute Nature will find much in them to study and to classify. We pass from them without any disdain of microscopy, that wonderful art which has revealed a world of the infinitely little, as extraordinary as, and even more beautiful than, that other world of sun and blue sky and shining star that has been worshipped by the poet since ever man became articulate. Pleasant it is for one who is not too much concerned with thinking out the great mysteries of Nature to sit in some thicket and watch the innumerable visitors that come to a woodland pool in the course of a day. For water is a prime requisite of the wild creatures—as necessary as food itself; and few there are who omit to come once at least in the course of twenty-four hours to drink or to wash. The birds, from the largest to the smallest, make of it a daily place of call; the wild hawk, so difficult to approach, stoops down to the pool and allays the thirst caused by his meal of flesh and bone, and will flap in the water and wash himself exactly as the sparrows do in a street pool after a shower of rain. So with all the dainty and exquisite denizens of the woods. The goldfinch comes, and the bullfinch, the hawfinch, the wren, and the robin; most frequently of all, perhaps, the wood-pigeon. He is one moment cooing up among the branches of a neighbouring elm, and the next he drops silently to the pool. So with the

shy and hiding four-footed animals. The hare and the rabbit do not drink much, because they are in the habit of taking their food at sunrise, when the dewy grass is, in the words of an old saying, both meat and drink to them. But the various rodents, from the rat to the wood-mouse, all come down to the water. The squirrel, after gambolling among the branches, hops to the ground to drink, and so thus does his miniature, the tiny and beautiful dormouse.

With the woodland photographs we give some pictures also of the marshes in spring. It might not be correct to say they are more beautiful now than they are at any other time of the year, but certainly they are more interesting. Later in spring,



LAST SUMMER'S GROWTH.

and early in summer, when the water-flags have grown and the water-weeds are in blossom, there will be a luxuriance of vegetation which is not to be expected while yet the growth of the new year is struggling with the witherings of the year that has passed away. But when the breeding season comes the marshes have an irresistible attraction for many kinds of birds, and for some animals, to say nothing of the renewed activity among their regular and natural inhabitants. In those days when the sunny April showers are falling, there is a mixed congregation following the ploughman: the rook, the jackdaw, and the starling are in black, or at least a very subdued colour, the black-headed gull,



"SILENT AND BARE."



"GLEAMING IN THE SUN."

who joins them, shows a fine contrast between his white wings and his ebony marking. The marsh, being near his feeding ground, and supplying what he wants for nesting purposes, is naturally chosen for a breeding haunt; and the wail of these birds as they circle above their nests is a sound all the more frequently heard in marshland, because many of the ponds and pools to which they formerly used to resort have now been drained and dried up, so as no longer to afford the same facilities as before. For a wanderer in marshland early spring has the great advantage of affording abundant opportunities for solitude. Those who visit the district in crowds in April do not like the shrill, bitter winds which intermingle unpleasantly with the pleasant glimpses of sunshine. Water at this season still looks forbiddingly cold; not till much later is its coolness inviting. But at present there is still remaining much to suggest the winter we are leaving behind. Trees still are bare, though here and there the foliage is just beginning to break on the dark branches. On the margin of the water there are more of the dead and whistling stalks of winter than of fresh new growth. Even the wind has not yet learned that soft and languishing sigh which comes when it has to blow through the heavy greenery of summer. It is shrill and piping, and tells of poverty and bareness. The very ripples on the water are chilly; yet how exhilarating is it to feel the first fine airs of April.

LINCOLN AND LIVERPOOL.



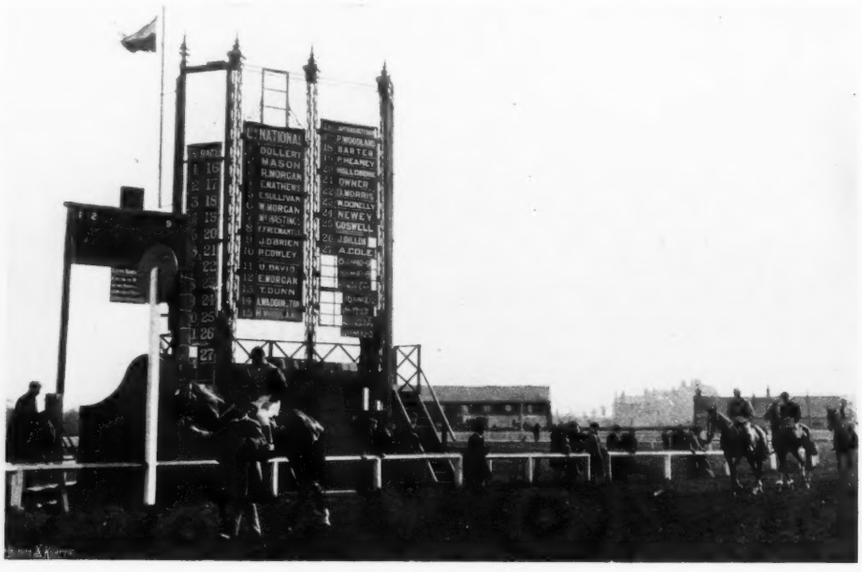
W. A. Rouch. *MOIFAA LED BEFORE THE KING.* Copyright

THE pleasurable anticipation with which the opening of the flat-racing season had been looked forward to was to a considerable extent doomed to disappointment. The typhoid-fever scare prevented the attendance at the Lincoln Meeting from attaining to anything like its usual proportions, and although, taken as a whole, the sport was good, the field for the Lincolnshire Handicap itself can but be described as poor both in quantity and quality, the only animal left in that could be described as of any real class being that very erratic colt Vedas; but, as is often the case, moderate horses provide good sport, and the actual race for the first handicap of the season was not devoid of excitement. Sansovino is by no means one of the best-plucked horses in training, but Griggs let him understand that he was expected to do his utmost, and when half the distance had been covered he was striding along at his best, with only Le Blizon in immediate attendance; but the pace was too hot for the latter, and Sansovino swept on by himself. Catty Crag was biding his time, but could not get through his horses, and had to pull out at a critical moment and come round on the outside. Once clear, however, he put in some tremendous work, and was overhauling Sansovino at every stride; but the effort was too late, and in spite of Sansovino's mulish attempts to lose the race, Griggs kept him going somehow or other, and he scrambled home a lucky winner by a head, with Park Ranger only beaten a neck for third place. Many really good horses have won the Lincolnshire Handicap in bygone days. Amongst them all, it is a moot question as to whether old Vulcan, who won the race after a dead heat with Veranda in 1871, was not at least as good as any of the animals of high renown who figure amongst the winners of the Lincoln. Not many horses could boast as well of having given 1st. 4lb. to the mighty Sterling and beaten him in a canter, or of having conceded something like 3st. with a similar result to Nuneham and Chopette, both of whom were remarkably speedy animals. Vulcan himself was rather an odd sort of horse to ride. Poor George Fordham told me more than once that he had a habit of sobbing and seeming to die away to nothing at some period or another of a race, and that the only thing to do was to sit still and leave him alone, and then, as soon as he was ready, he would jump into his bridle and go on to win his race, which, added Fordham, "he wasn't very long about."

On Monday, the 27th, the opening day of the meeting, there was a tremendous race for the Batthyany Plate of 800 sovs., Madden on Rising Falcon and Griggs on Tirantes fighting out a desperate finish, which terminated by a head in favour of the former, the speedy Pansy Masters finishing third three lengths away. The Trial Plate, the first flat race of the season, was won by Transfer, by Trenton. Last year, oddly enough, the same race was won by a son of Aurum. Both Trenton and Aurum are Australian-bred stallions, and both stand at the Cobham Stud. The Elsham Plate resulted in another close fight, the judge being unable to separate Vibrant and Lot, the latter of whom, by the way, is out of Pentecost, the mare as to whose identity there was so much litigation a short time ago.

To revert to the proper order of things, the races, other than the Lincolnshire Handicap, on the Tuesday do not really call for very much notice, and, although the Lincoln executive have a decided advantage in having the first three days' racing of the season all to themselves, they will have to bestir themselves if they wish to keep that meeting up to the mark. As far as money is concerned, the Hainton Plate of 400 sovs. came next in importance to the Lincolnshire Handicap, and was won by Mr. H. J. Newman's Cock of the Roost, with Given Up and Saroth respectively second and third.

The Brocklesby Stakes is a time-honoured institution, and on that account some of us, not many, stayed on for Wednesday, the concluding day of the meeting. Few Brocklesby winners, with the exception of The Bard and Donovan, have ever developed into horses of honour and renown, and now that Lord Durham's fatal measure of four-furlong races is coming into effect, even worse horses than before are likely to be returned as winners of this and similar races. Certainly no ordinary judge could discover anything of promise in the Brocklesby field this year, with the possible exception of the winner, Mr. Dugdale's colt by Donovan out of Lady Lena, who ran very gamely under considerable difficulties and won by a short head, ridden by Mr. Thursby. The winner appeared to be thoroughly fit, and was in no way distressed by his exertions. On the other hand, the colt by Galashiels out of Miskah, who was second, was sweating profusely and blowing a good deal as well, so that there would appear to be strong probability of his showing considerably better form later on. One dislikes being a prophet of evil, but it does seem so patent, to those who know and look on, that much harm will inevitably accrue to young and half-formed two year olds from the manner in which they are "jumped off" and driven from pillar to post in these four-furlong scrambles, that one cannot help wishing Lord Durham had been content to leave matters alone so far as five-furlong races were concerned. The concluding race of the day and of the meeting was the Queen's Plate of 200 sovs., in which Mark Time took ample revenge on Karakoul for his beating over hurdles, and won comfortably by four lengths to the tune of hearty cheering.



W. A. Rouch. *THE ELECTRIC BOARD.* Copyright

Thursday, the 30th, found the racing world assembled in full force to witness the opening of one of the most brilliantly successful meetings ever held. The racing



W. A. Rouch. THE PARADE PAST THE STANDS. Copyright

Liverpool is always maintained at a very high standard, and the public showed, by their presence in vast numbers, that they thoroughly appreciated the efforts made to provide really good sport. The March Two Year Old Stakes was won by a head in the last stride by Lord B. Paget's Eastwell, by Loved One out of East Wilton, and it may interest some people to point out that Loved One is a Herod horse. Mr. W. M. G. Singer's colt by St. Serf out of Lady Chancellor credited him with the rich Union Jack Stakes, which he won rather easily by a length and a-half from Mr. J. B. Joel's Chestnut; a length away was Mr. Thursby on Standen, the property of his brother, Sir J. Thursby. The Liverpool Spring Cup is often made the medium for a heavy gamble, and although this year there did not appear to be any very heavy commissions to be executed, there was a considerable amount of money invested on several of the competitors for the race, which Lancashire, who had got through somehow or other on the rails, eventually managed to win by about half a length.

Friday, the Grand National day, opened bright and clear, but it also brought disaster in the shape of an accident to Williamson, who was to have ridden Moifaa in the great race. It might easily have been a serious matter. Most of the crack cross-country horsemen had long been engaged, and with some twenty-seven starters there seemed small probability of a capable jockey being found in time. However, all doubts were set at rest by the announcement that Dollery had been set at liberty by Mr. D. Faber and would have the honour of wearing the Royal colours. Most of the candidates for the National were early on view in the paddock, and were eagerly criticised by the huge crowd. Moifaa, naturally enough, was the centre of attraction; he certainly looked well, and was full of muscle; but he is a very peculiar horse, and is probably at his best when most horses would be deemed to be at their very worst, as far as looks go, and a friend of mine who has known the horse pretty nearly ever since he was foaled would not have him at any price, on the ground that he looked too well. Timothy Titus caught the eye as a lengthy, game-looking chaser. Dearslayer has not come on in the right way, and is a "split up" sort of animal, who does not look like ever being a great chaser. Nappy Tandy was full of muscle and in first-class condition. Ranunculus is quite a good cut of a horse, and could not possibly have been turned out in better fettle, Seahorse II. had a very business-like appearance, and the same can be said of Hercules II. The race itself, in all its details, from the brilliant spectacle offered by the twenty-seven runners as they moved up in stately procession for the parade, with the sunshine glinting on the varied colours of the riders, to the storm of cheering which welcomed the victory of Kirkland, was full of interest. The flag fell almost as soon as the horses were marshalled at the start, and Detail immediately showed in front, with Hercules II., Saxilby (brother to Kozak), Seahorse II., Timothy Titus, and Royal Drake coming on next; the whole field of twenty-seven runners swept over the first fence and settled down to their work, but the "grief" was not long in coming. At the



W. A. Rouch. THE START FOR THE GRAND NATIONAL. Copyright

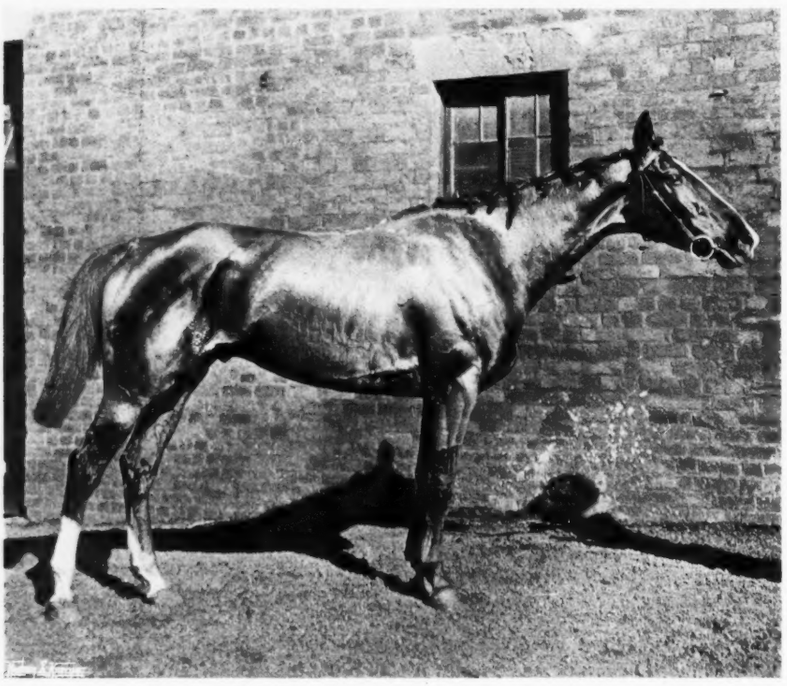


W. A. Rouch. RANUNCULUS LEADS OVER THE WATER JUMP. Copyright

second fence Royal Drake came down; at the next one, Longthorpe and Nereus refused, and Ascetic's Silver, Kiora, and Hallgate all fell. Moifaa, who seemed to be going very kindly in the hands of Dollery, now took up the running from Timothy Titus, with Detail, Hercules II., Seahorse II., and Kirkland striding along in strong pursuit. So they ran to Valentine's Brook, where Biology and Detail fell; Timothy Titus, taking up the running, went on from Moifaa, Seahorse II., Dearslayer, Hercules II., and Kirkland. Coming on to the race-course, Dearslayer ran into third place. As they swung over the water Ranunculus forged his way to the front, and he and Timothy Titus made joint running, with Moifaa going on third. At the first fence into the country for the second time down came Miss Clifden II., and The Actuary, Matthew, and Dearslayer were pulled up; two fences further on Captain Rasbotham and What Next came down. Moifaa, who had been completely beaten, and was running on in distress, came to grief at Beecher's Brook. Timothy Titus once more wrested the lead from Ranunculus, Hallgate was beaten off, and Cottenshope last of all. At the fence before Valentine's, Aunt May, Timothy Titus, and Bucheron all came to grief. The outsider, Buckaway II., began to creep up; drawing up to Anchor Bridge, Ranunculus dropped back, and Kirkland drew to the front, clear of Phil May, Ranunculus, Hercules II., Napper Tandy, and Buckaway II. Seahorse II. was shortly afterwards eased up. Phil May made a bit of a mistake on landing over the last fence but one, and his rider came off, but was soon in the saddle again. Mason brought Kirkland to the front, where he remained until the end, and, in spite of being hampered by a couple of riderless horses, won amid rousing cheers by three lengths from Napper Tandy, who finished about the same distance in front of Buckaway II., who started at the very useful price of 100 to 1. The victory of Kirkland was most popular and thoroughly well-deserved, but it shows conclusively that something was wrong with Moifaa, who, on last year's running, should certainly have been somewhere near the winner, if not actually in front of him. TRENTON.



W. A. Rouch. *KIRKLAND WINS THE GRAND NATIONAL.* Copyright



KIRKLAND, BY KIRKHAM, DAM BY PERIZONIUS.

HOUSE MOTTOES.

THE REV. CANON ELLACOMBE contributes to the April number of the *National Review* an article on "House Mottoes," which should scarcely fail to interest our readers. After a short *résumé* of the history of these inscriptions, he comes to a classification of them. The simplest, and perhaps the oldest, was the Latin word "Salve," which has its counterpart in our English "Welcome." Later this was expanded, one of the best of the expansions being over the door at Montacute, Somerset, dated 1600, and reading:

> "Through this wide-opening gate
> None comes too early, none returns too late."

On the pediment of the west front, Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, is the Latin sentence, "His utere mecum," "Use these with me." On the porch at Beddington, Sussex, is this inscription:

> "To those who cross the threshold of this door
> A hearty welcome, both to rich and poor;
> One favour only we would bid you grant—
> Feel you're at home, and ask for what you want."

At Corby Castle, Cumberland, "Suis et amicis," "For family and friends." Mr. Halliwell Phillips, the well-known Shakespearian scholar, had a house in a very exposed place at Ditchling Road, near Brighton, on which this motto was written:

> "Come hither, come hither, come hither!
> Here shall you see no enemy but winter
> And rough weather."

We hope the eminent Shakespearian scholar was not responsible for attributing the passage to "King Lear," even if the garbling of the text be deliberate. And on the door opening to the library, "Open locks, whoever knocks." But all the mottoes were not of so genial a character. At Penny Hall, Almondbury, is one of more doubtful meaning—"Interet fides, exeat fraus, 1617," "Enter faith; away with deceit." At Froome Royal, in the County Tyrone, there is a very independent motto:

> "Welcome to come in, and
> As welcome to go by, 1670."

At Madeley, in Staffordshire, on a half-timbered house, dated 1647, there is "Walk, knave, what look'st at?" Many owners of houses have left a motto that enjoined good works on their successors. On the roof of the hall at Rockingham Castle, for instance, there is:

> "The house shall be preserved and never shall decaye,
> Where the Almighty God is honoured and served daye by daye."

We all know the motto on George Herbert's house at Bemerton. At Alnwick is this: "That which your father of old hath purchased and left you to possess, do you dearly hold to show his worthiness, 1714." At Hawick there is this pregnant motto, "All was others—all will be others." Some mottoes breathe the spirit of content, of which an example is:

> "Travel east or travel west,
> A man's own house is still the best."

Hawker of Morwenstow had this:

> "A house, a glebe, a pound a day;
> A pleasant place to read and pray.
> Be true to Church, be kind to poor;
> A minister for evermore."

On the east side of a house at Sedgeforth, Norfolk, is this:

> "Though the day be ne'er so long,
> It runneth at length to evensong."

We are indebted to Canon Ellacombe for his very interesting paper on this subject, but if general attention were directed to the subject it would most likely be possible to make a yet more attractive collection of house mottoes than has been accomplished so far.

THE CAVE-DWELLERS OF ENGLAND.

"WE English love to take our holidays by running to the Continent, and fondly imagine that we must cross the Channel to see strange sights and enjoy scenes of beauty. It would be hard to find sweeter, quainter, lovelier spots than may be reached very easily at the point where Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Staffordshire join." So writes Baring Gould, one of our sweetest word-painters, while speaking more particularly of Kinver and its surroundings.

Kinver is situated at the south-western edge of the county of Stafford, just where it joins Worcester and Salop. It is a small town on the banks of the river Stour, some four miles from Stourbridge, and about four and a-half miles from Kidderminster. The only access to the place, unless one prefers to walk, is by the electric tram from Dudley or Stourbridge. Passing through the main street, an enjoyable walk brings us to what is known as Kinver Edge. This is a great ridge, or edge, of new red sandstone, which terminates abruptly above the river Stour, the extreme headland of which is 542ft. above the sea-level. Between this headland and the valley below lies a remarkable mass of isolated crag which goes by the name of the Holy Austin Rock. This is literally honeycombed with habitations in three storeys, or stages, with families occupying each level, although at present all the dwellings are not tenanted. It was here that we made our first stay and the photographs of the old lady at the well and the old gentleman at his door were taken. The old lady, Mrs. Chance, informed us that she had lived in the rock-house eleven years, and paid £8 1s. 8d. a year rent for it. The old gentleman, who had occupied his house thirty-five years, however, lived rent free, the parish also contributing 3s. 6d. a week towards his maintenance. His house consisted of three rooms, or caves, in one of which he lived, one he used as a storeroom, and at the end of a



W. H. Bowman. **AT VALE'S ROCK.** Copyright

long tunnel running from the living-room was a large cave hollowed out of the solid rock, in which, he stated, "many years ago, as many as fifty people had danced." It may be interesting to mention that these rock-houses and the adjoining lands belong to Mr. P. H. Foley, the well-known Worcestershire cricketer, who lives at Prestwood, close to Kinver, and who is Lord of the Manors of Kinver and Compton, his agent, who collects the rents of these houses, being Mr. H. K. Foster, another famous cricketer, and one of the well-known Worcestershire family of that name. The well shown in the accompanying illustrations is one of exceptional depth, and a pebble pushed over the side seems to



W. H. Bowman. **WELL, HOLY AUSTIN ROCK.** Copyright

take some seconds before it strikes the water. No one appears to know exactly how it derived the name of Holy Austin Rock, but in all probability it was at one time occupied by a recluse of that name, or may have belonged to the Friars of St. Augustine. There is another rock-dwelling about a mile away, by the name of Meg-a-Fox Hole, otherwise Nanny's Rock, which, tradition says, was at one time the hiding-place of a notorious band of highwaymen. We, however, took the wrong turning on the moor and missed this rock, but found ourselves at Vale's Rock, and it was here that we had the privilege of seeing one of the most perfect rock-houses extant. We wound our way up the rock to a height of about 100ft. from the moor, and found a delightful old house hollowed out of the face of the cliff, with a small ledge in front by which access to the house is obtained. Here the stable for the horse and the fowlhouse were all carved out of the solid rock, in the same primeval manner as the house itself. Above the house is the date 1794; this is not, however, generally supposed to be the actual date of the excavation.

Standing on the ledge of the rock in front of the house, we have a beautiful view of the counties of Worcester and Hereford, with the Malvern Hills on our left and the rugged Welsh mountains in front, forming a hazy background to a panoramic view of exceptional beauty. A walk of another couple of miles brought us to the small village of Blakeshall, near Wolverley, in the vicinity of which we found a most picturesque group of rock-dwellings, in a natural amphitheatre, below the earthworks of an ancient camp, the gardens of which slope down from the platform before the houses to the high road. In summer, when the roses and honeysuckle are in bloom, the bright flowers and green leaves make a beautiful harmony with the red rock for the background. Occasional deaths, from the falling in of a roof, are recorded, and now and then a dangerous mass of rock is purposely dislodged, to prevent accidents. Primitive though these rock-dwellings may appear, they are, in many respects, infinitely superior to the small houses in the crowded courts of our great cities. It is in comparatively few places in the world that civilised people are still found living after the manner of primitive man—

> "In hollow holes, like swarms of tiny ants,
> In sunless depths of caverns";

but out in this district the peasants have lived in caves from time immemorial down to the present day. Wherever a suitable rock was found, windows and doorways were cut in the face of

the cliff; chimneys ascended through the solid rock; kitchen, bedroom, storeroom, and stable were all excavated out of the heart of the red hill, whilst, in many cases, the gardens themselves were planted on the top of these primitive dwellings. In some cases a cave has been hollowed out and the front bricked up; but these, of course, are not nearly so interesting as the ones depicted in the accompanying photographs, which are, in all cases, with the exception of the doors, windows, and chimneys, carved entirely out of the solid rock. The majority of the caves are warm and dry, others, owing to the porous nature of the stone, become very damp in winter, and for this reason have to be abandoned.



W. H. Bowman. AT HOLY AUSTIN ROCK. Copyright

THE GATE OF DREAMS.

AMONG the superstitions that obtain with the mountain-folk of the wild North Country, there is one which has thrown a spell over my imagination, and to which my thoughts are always returning. This may be due to the way of its telling, or rather, perhaps, to the wild beauty of the scenery amid which it was told. It was one of those weird mysterious twilights that are of the very air of enchantment. I stood upon a rock overlooking a waste of desolate ocean. The wind was a moan of unspeakable weariness, the light a far-off phantom flame. And as I stood and gazed across the grey waste of sea, the dreams came to me, the dreams that haunt great waters, the dreams that come to those who stand in the shadow of the hills.

I was not alone, for as my eyes came back from Infinity they fell upon a solitary figure standing above me with eyes gone out into the golden distance. It was the form of an old man bent and wasted, a pathetic figure silhouetted against the fading sky, giving to the wild and lonely scene its fitting human note. For a long time I watched him in silence, and then, impelled by some strange inward sympathy, I drew near and spoke to him. He was old, very old; his long white hair floated upon his shoulders, and his beard was as a tangle of hoar frost on his breast. But in the eyes that he turned upon me as I spoke there was still something of the divine bewilderment of youth, of its hopes, its fears, its illusions.

They were the eyes of a dreamer, deep, unsounded, fathomless. His voice was clear and strong and sweet, as though it strove to keep in tune with the inward music of his thoughts. I think that he, too, was conscious of some compelling mutual sympathy, some voiceless harmony of soul, for there, unasked, and as an old-time friend speaking to the brother of his thoughts, he told me all his heart's treasure, and above all the superstition of the Hidden Door. I cannot recall his words to give them in their native beauty and simplicity; I can only give his dreams as I remember them.

He told me that with his people, or rather with those of them who thought deeply on such things, there was the belief that somewhere—it might be among the hills, or away across far oceans at the edge of space, or in the midst of some undiscovered sea, but somewhere—there was a hidden, a secret door, through which one might pass out of the world into a place of unimaginable joys. And this door he called the Gate of Dreams, for it was only the dreamer who should find it. But as yet no one had found it, or, having found it, had returned again. For one summer noon, many years ago, a little girl had gone out from her home with a message to a neighbour, and had never returned, nor had any trace of her since been found. She was like a fairy's child, he said, with curling golden hair, and wild blue eyes. Nor had she the ways of other children, but loved the companionship of her elders better than that of her playmates, more especially of those of them who were themselves dwellers in fairyland, and who could tell her stories of mystery and enchantment—of the spirits that haunted the hills, and of the voices that wailed in the wind. And most of all she loved to hear about the Gate of Dreams, and would listen with eyes that were themselves the windows of dreamland and the homes of all sweet vision. So she went out from human ken, and returned no more. Some said she had fallen from the rocks—the sea was a passion with her—and been drowned: if so, the sea kept its secret; some that she had been stolen for her beauty, and taken to a far country; others that she had been but a fairy changeling, and had returned to her own kin; while some few would hear of nothing but that she had found the Gate of Dreams. And this was the belief of the old man—that she had indeed come upon the Hidden Door. And he had pondered much as to how a little child should have found so soon, and so easily, that which the quest of a lifetime had never yet revealed. He loved, he said, to picture to himself this little white-souled maiden dancing along her lonely mountain path, always expecting to see open before her the golden gateway. Perchance there had met her one of those beautiful bright beings that hover unseen above the steps of purity and innocence, who with loving voice and caressing hands had led her over and beyond the purple mountains, along the paths of twilight across the edge of space into the sunset distances.

Or perchance she had been standing upon the rocks, looking out across the sea, her eyes full of the ecstasy of sunset, and out of the flaming West had come a fairy sail, blown with a soundless wind, steered by no mortal hand. And it had come on and on with becalming airs, and far-off sweetest singing, until it touched the rock on which she stood. And invisible arms had enfolded her, and raised her, and set her in that boat of no known name or country, and so she had gone out beyond the sunset, and twilight, and starlight into that vast Somewhither that lies on the other side of the Gate of Dreams. But as I listened to the old man's visionary words my mind framed another picture. For I saw floating far out on the ebbing tide a small white face upturned to the crimson sky with eyes that saw not its glory. Like a mass of golden seaweed her hair lay upon the water, and her arms were outspread as though she found her sleep full of rest and comfort. It was thus that the fairy sail came to her, the sail for which she had so often looked in vain, the sail which no mortal eyes have ever seen; and it was her *spirit* that it bore through far-off undiscovered seas past change, and space, and time to the door which opens to the touch of Innocence and Faith.

But it was the old man's belief, and I did not try to shake it, that living eyes might behold the Gate of Dreams, if only they were pure and innocent and true. And this, he said, was why it was left to a little girl to find it when so many who were older and wiser than she had failed. For he never doubted that she had found it.

It is many years since I left the old man to his dreams on that lonely rock—for though the twilight had darkened to night, he still looked away into the gloom—it is many years; yet I never stand in the twilight now, or wander on the hills, or gaze across far waters, but my thoughts return to the Gate of Dreams. And it seems to me that the old man's belief was in part true, and that there is in the secret places of the Soul a Gate of Dreams through which all lovely thoughts do pass continually—only it is for the inward and not the outward eye.

I know that I have seen it with all its fair approaches, often in the mute and mystic hour, whose silence is of joy and whose beauty of mystery, when the sky is a field of roses, and the river that waters it a flood of gold. I have seen it, too, through the open windows of the Soul, in the soundless depths of lovely eyes, a far-off vision of delight. And I have heard its voices borne on the wings of music, when the bows are drawn across the yearning strings, and the ivory notes are touched to ecstasy. And I have breathed its perfumes in the fair free places of morning, in the meadow paths of Spring, in the rose red gardens of Summer.

It seems strange to me, as I recall the face and eyes—so gravely beautiful—of him who told me of the Gate of Dreams, that he should have been unaware that he had long ago found the hidden door in the beauty of his thoughts and the purity of his heart, whose thoughts and heart were as those of a little

child. Ah, if only each one of us might sometimes take the twilight path of dreams, the path which leads out from the world's weariness, and wickedness, through what enchanted lands, what valleys breathing calm, and rest, and peace, our way would be. For it is no idle myth, this superstition of the Hidden Door, but in the minds of each one of us there is a Gate of Dreams—dreams that are lovely or unlovely as our thoughts make them, and it is through this gate that we shall pass at the last, when the darkness comes and the dreams which so many have scoffed at are the only real thing.

Years after, I went again to the mountain land and once again stood upon the solitary rock while the twilight deepened across the restless waters, but the old man came no more. Through many golden eves I stood upon that place of glorious outlook waiting for the forlorn pathetic figure that came not again. And I could not doubt but that the fairy sail had come to him at last, and that he had set out on the voyage which is to an undiscovered shore, to the country that he longed for and the place that he desired. And I know that he must have passed through the golden gateway, and that his eyes are full of those unimaginable dreams, which are beyond the voice of morning to awaken or the touch of the world to take away.

R. G. T. COVENTRY.

'LOWANCE.

THE patriarchs were agriculturists, and patriarchal ways have lingered on longer among farmers than among any other class. Old customs die hard on holdings which lie remote in secluded dales; while but one generation back whole neighbourhoods, now opened up by branch railway lines, were, to many domestic intents and purposes, living in the Middle Ages.

The ancient and comfortable practice of serving out 'lowance (as they call it in the North), a refreshment of bread and cheese and beer at mid-morning and mid-afternoon during certain seasons of extra pressure of work, may, perhaps, be doomed to extinction when some sort of co-operative system supplants the patriarchal, and motor machinery ousts hand labour; but if this should ever be so, it would be a matter for real regret. There was something homely and cheerful, a smack of the old uncalculating days, about 'lowance-time, and one would be loth to see its proper celebration discontinued. And how pleasant was the office of the server! Setting off from the homestead, in charge of the wooden keg of beer and a butter-basket filled with slices of bread and cheese packed in a napkin, he would drive his donkey-cart to the harvest-field. At his coming the workers would assemble under a hedgerow tree to receive their portions, the foreman serving out the beer in horn beakers to each in turn, every drinker, before handing back the cup, observing the ancient rite of jerking out the last few drops upon the ground.

They made a picturesque group, the resting figures in the shade—the women in sun-bonnets and clean aprons, and the boys, "bandmakers," sitting all together with the men; while the horses, drooping restfully as they stood in harness, swished at the flies that settled and buzzed, ever ready to return to the attack. At this time the master would ride upon his cob, and exchange time-honoured remarks about the weather, the crops, the news in the papers, and what not. His presence was meant, no doubt, as the equivalent of the company officer's visitation at Mr. Atkins's dinner-time, save that the stereotyped question, "Any complaints?" was not put; and it would probably have met with a unanimous negative if it had been. Of later days, however, one has known requests preferred for "teetotal stuff," instead of beer, so that brews of cold tea have had to be made ready against 'lowance-time.

When all were served, the donkey-driver would see the gear put together, and then make for the nine-acre field, to carry the 'lowance to Sam the ploughman, horse-raking the oat stubble. But there would generally follow some sort of mild wrangling before he could get possession of the horse-rake for a turn or two up and down, while Sam had "two draws" of his pipe, resting beside the donkey-cart. "And don't you remember," says Memory, jogging one's elbow, "the time, once when harvest was very late and the weather chancy, how the men worked on after dusk for two or three evenings, leading barley from the Philmers and stacking by moonlight; and how we took them hot mulled ale, for the nights were chilly, and stood on ladders with lanterns fixed to pitchforks, to help the stackers to see their job through?"

Besides haytime and harvest there was another season at which 'lowance was customary, namely, sheep-clipping-time; and the orthodox ration for the clippers was cheese cakes, big ones baked in platters with a generous thickness of pastry, and plenty of curds, with currants, and a dash of rum for flavouring. Whether the cheese cakes represented a general or merely a local celebration is not certain; but the antiquity of the custom, at any rate as far back as the middle of the seventeenth century, may be proved from the farming book of Henry Best, a yeoman-farmer of the Yorkshire Wolds at that date, who wrote: "Clippers are to have 4d. a score for clippinge; and then are you to sende them aboute noone a groate's worth of ale and bread and cheese and perhapps a cheese cake; and against that time they make an ende, yow are to make ready a dinner for them, and to provide five or six services, and allwayes a joynte of roasted mutton for one of your services, for that is allwayes expected of them."



Miss M. A. Newlands. **ON A SUSSEX MARSH.** Copyright.



W. Reia. *HEAVY WORK.* Copyright

It was at the time of the annual sheep-washing, however, that Mr. Best was most solicitous for his men's bodily welfare: "Our custome is also (aboute noone, or when wee thinke they have neare hande halfe done) to sende for a groate's worth of ale and a white loaf; and then to take a quarte or three pintes of milke and boyle it, and then put it to the ale and make thereof two greate possettes in two scale-dishes; and then do we take the white loafe, and either grate or crumme the same very small into the possettes; then do we throw in some pepper and grated nutmegges, and make the same very hotte therewith, and this kinde of drinke doe wee give to our washers as they stand in the wash dyke, and when they are in the midst of theire labours."

It would be interesting to notice the frequency with which we find the products of milk alluded to in literature as the traditional fare of shepherds. On Mr. Best's farm ewes were kept for milking; and though the use of ewes' milk has long been abandoned among us, no doubt in a simpler age those who had the care of sheep followed naturally the self-supporting practice. Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck of Monkbarns might, perhaps, have allowed that the kebbuck, the Scottish ewe-milk cheese, had for its counterpart in the classics the *pinguis caseus* of Virgil's shepherds; while the equivalent of another pastoral dainty mentioned in the Eclogues, *et pressi copia lactis*, might, perhaps, be sought in the curds, of which Sancho Panza was so fond, that, rather than risk losing a supply he had bought from some shepherds, he bestowed them in his master's helmet, with dire consequences when the Don proceeded hurriedly to clap on his head-piece. It will be remembered, too, that when the two were discussing the project of quitting knight-errantry and taking to the shepherd life, while Don Quixote's thoughts were all of poetry and rustic gallantry, Sancho's aspirations were of a grosser cast: "Oh, what neat wooden spoons shall I make when I am a shepherd! What curds and cream shall I eat!" H. Raphoe.

THE LINE OF HEROD.

So much has been written of late concerning the decadence or disappearance of the line of thorough-bred horses descended especially in tail male from Herod, that the subject appears to be one of considerable interest to breeders of bloodstock, more especially in this country, where from one cause and another this once famous strain of blood has been reduced to something not far removed from total extinction. As regards its representatives in tail male, Herod himself was a bay horse, bred in 1758 by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland. He did not run until October, 1763, when as a five year old he beat the Duke of Ancaster's Roman, by Blank, also a five year old, both carrying 8st. 7lb., over the Beacon Course at Newmarket for a match of 500 guineas a side, and in the following April he won a Sweepstakes of 300 sovs., beating Sir John Moore's Tartar, by Tartar out of Miss



W. A. Rouch. *PASTISSON.* Copyright

Meredith. He then won a match at Ascot for 1,000 guineas a side, giving 6lb. to Lord Rockingham's Tom Tinker, over four miles, and followed up this victory by giving 3lb. to the Duke of Grafton's Antonius over the Beacon Course, and beating him easily. In the following year a fresh match was made between these two horses for 1,000 guineas a side, when Herod was asked to concede 9lb. to his adversary, which he did without much trouble. In October of the same year he was beaten in a match for 1,000 guineas a side when attempting to give 14lb. to Sir James Lowther's Ascham. On the death of the Duke of Cumberland Sir John Moore purchased Herod, and matched him against Lord Bolingbroke's Turf, five years old, and once more Herod had to put up with defeat; he then went amiss, but in 1767 took part in the tremendous battle between himself, Bay Malton, Turf, and Ascham for a sweepstake of 500 guineas each, over the Beacon Course. The excitement over this race was tremendous, and enormous sums of money changed hands. All Yorkshire backed Bay Malton; and an old writer says that "when it was seen that Bay Malton was holding Herod the Yorkshiremen roared with delight, so that they might have been heard for leagues around." In the following May, Herod ran his last race, beating Ascham, from whom he was receiving 7lb., in a match for 1,000 guineas a side, over the Beacon Course. In 1770 Herod went to the stud, and it has been computed that during the nineteen years his stock were running they won a total of £201,505, in addition to forty-three hogsheads of claret. He died in 1780, at the age of twenty-one.



W. A. Rouch. *GREY LEG.* Copyright

The name of "thoroughbred" as applied to the stock so-called has always appeared to me to be somewhat of a misnomer, though I confess that it is difficult to suggest another; but our French neighbours, who are very precise in these matters, appear to be nearer the mark in their definition of the breed as "Anglo-Arabs." In this respect the pedigree of Herod does not differ materially from that of other "families," but it is of such interest that it is here given:

HEROD	TARTAR	Partner	Jigg	Byerly Turk	Pedigree unknown
					Pedigree unknown
				Daughter of	Spanker
					Unknown
			Sister to Mixbury	Curwen's Bay Barb	—
					—
				Daughter of	Spot
					Daughter of white-legged Lowther Barb
		Meliora	Fox	Clumsy	Hautboy
					Miss D'Arcy's Pet Mare
				Bay Peg	The Leedes Arabian
					Young Bald Peg
			Milkmaid	Snail	Pedigree unknown
					Pedigree unknown
				Shield's Galloway	Pedigree unknown
					—
	CYPRON	Blaze	Flying Childers	Darley Arabian	Imported by Mr. Darley
					—
				Betty Leedes	Careless
					Sister to Leedes
			Confederate filly	Grey Grantham	Brownlow Turk
					Unknown
				Daughter of	Rutland Black Barb
					Bright's Roan
		Selima	Bethell's Arabian	—	—
					—
				—	—
					—
			Daughter of	Champion	The Harpur Arabian
					Daughter of Hautboy
				Daughter of	The Darley Arabian
					Daughter of Merlin

On examination of this pedigree we find that the Byerly Turk was imported into England by Captain Byerly, who used him as a charger throughout the whole of King William's wars in Ireland. The breeding of the grandam of Jigg is unknown. Curwen's Bay Barb was brought to England by Mr. Curwen, who got him from Count Thoulouse, a natural son of Louis XIV.; the pedigree of the dam of Spot is unknown. Nothing further is known of Miss D'Arcy's pet mare beyond the fact that her dam was a Ledbury Royal mare. As to how the Leedes Arabian was bred we know nothing. Snail was bred by Sir E. Blackett, who sold him to the Duke of Wharton, but his pedigree has not been kept. No trace of the breeding of Shield's Galloway can be discovered. All that is known of the Darley Arabian is that he was brought from abroad by Mr. Darley. The Brownlow Turk was brought to this country about the year 1700 by Lord Brownlow, and the Stud Book contains no mention whatever of the dam of Grey Grantham; neither is the pedigree of Bright's Roan to be ascertained. Bethell's Arabian was imported by Mr. Bethell of Rise in Holdernesse, a famous breeding district in the East Riding of Yorkshire, but that is all that we can gather concerning his origin.

To revert to Herod himself, some of the best of the many good race-horses immediately sired by Herod were: Faith (**3**), the winner of the Oaks in 1781, her dam Curiosity; Maid of the Oaks (**3**), who won the same race in 1783; Bridget (**8**), the Oaks winner of 1776; and Cœlia (12), who was returned the winner in 1793, her dam Proserpine, sister to Eclipse; then Phenomenon (2) won the St. Leger in 1783, his dam Frenzy, by Eclipse; Highflyer (13) was never beaten, Calash (2) became the dam of Whiskey, Woodpecker (1) was the sire of Buzzard, and both Weagle and Evergreen must be counted among the good sons of Herod. In tail male from Herod also came the three famous brothers Rubens, Castrel, and Selim, and from daughters of Rubens came the Derby winners Dangerous, Phosphorus, and Coronation. Diomed (the first winner of the Derby), Glencoe, The Flying Dutchman, and Gladiator are no mean male descendants of Herod; and, when one considers what these horses were, and what they have done for the bloodstock of the countries to which they were expatriated, it seems as though some key was furnished to the decadence of the Herod line in tail male in this country. Diomed and Glencoe went to America, but before they left had become the sires of Young Giantess and Pocahontas, the former of whom was the dam of the famous Eleanor, and also of Julia and Cressida; while of Pocahontas it can only be said that no mare before or since has ever left such an abiding mark in the history of her race. Even if she had done nothing else, as the dam of Stockwell her fame would be assured for all time. The Flying Dutchman left us Flying Duchess, the dam of Galopin; and Gladiator bequeathed us Queen Mary, the dam of Blink Bonny. It is only of comparatively recent years that the rage for Galopin and St. Simon blood has set in, and the persistent inbreeding to Eclipse must inevitably need a correcting influence. Breeders might do well to pause and consider, especially with regard to the extraordinary success which used to attend the cross of Eclipse and Herod blood. Personally speaking, I am strongly, very strongly, of opinion that Herod blood and Herod mares are fast becoming almost necessary to our English stock. Omnium II., Callistrate, Elf II., and Le Senateur in France are all Herods through The Flying Dutchman. Nabot represents the line through Thormanby, while another brilliant



W. A. Rouch. *McYARDLEY.* Copyright

representative of the Herod line in France is the beautiful grey Le Sancy, who was second to Flying Fox in the list of winning stallions last year. To emphasise further the value of Herod blood, take such names as those of Pantaloon, Venison, Bay Middleton, Ion, Cowl, The Flying Dutchman, Sweetmeat, Kingston, Wild Dayrell, Weatherbit, Thormanby, Macaroni, Parmesan, Buccaneer, Sea Saw, and Favonius; their value in a pedigree is incontestable. They are all Herod horses, and to the number might be added others of almost equal value.

There are, unfortunately, only too few Herod sires available in this country. There are probably some of whose existence I am unaware; but including Pastisson, imported by the Cobham Stud from France, and The Victory, imported from Australia and now serving in Ireland, the most suitable appear to be Grey Leg, McYardley, Ocean Wave, and Star of Hanover. As to their respective merits opinions are sure to differ, but there is no getting away from the credentials of Pastisson. He is a brown horse, foaled in 1890, by St. Cyr out of Pastèque. He is himself, through Dollar, a direct descendant of The Flying Dutchman, and his sire was out of the French Oaks winner Finlande, by Ion out of Fraudulent, by Venison; then Pastèque, the dam of Pastisson, was by Marksman, second to Hermit in the Derby, out of Pastille, by Vermouth, winner of the Grand Prix, and a direct descendant of Partisan. Pastisson is a horse of tremendous power, with great bone. He must have a remarkably sound constitution, for he won eighteen races in one season, and is a remarkably sure foal getter. Many of his stock won races in France last season, and this year the winner of the Prix St. Cloud, the first big flat race of the year in that country, was by him. Grey Leg comes next; he is to be found at the Langton Hall Stud, Northallerton, and considering his class and his success as a sire, the fee of forty-five guineas demanded for his services is a very moderate one. He is a direct descendant of Ion, his grandsire was out of a Bay Middleton mare, and if Bend Or's pedigree is to be accepted as correct, he inherits Thormanby blood through Rouge Rose, in addition to which there is a decidedly useful cross of Rosicrucian in Douranee. Grey Leg won the Portland Plate, the City and Suburban, and other races. Many of his stock have run well.

The Victory, foaled in 1898, is by The Admiral out of The Charmer; he comes of the No. 1 family, and is a descendant of Fisherman. He was a really good horse himself, and won many races over all distances, including the Melbourne Cup, carrying 8st. 12lb. He will, it is sincerely to be hoped, prove to be the means of reviving the male line of Pantaloon, whose daughters proved to be almost invaluable at the stud. The Victory has gone to the Straffan Stud in Ireland, where he will probably not be long in proving his value as a sire.

Mr. Stedall is the owner of that beautifully-bred horse Ocean Wave, by See Saw out of Par Excellence, by Stockwell. In his early days he met with an accident which prevented him from being trained. He is a typically-bred Herod horse, and, with none too many opportunities, has sired a good number of winners. He is a compact and powerful horse of the No. 1 family. Trident, one of his get, was not far from being the best of his year, and yet such is the craze for fashion that this good stallion is standing at a fee of 9½ guineas.



W. A. Rouch. *STAR OF HANOVER.* Copyright

Star of Hanover was, I think, imported by Mr. Curtis, and brings back the line of Glencoe. He is by Hanover, and his dam is remarkably well bred, being by Kendal out of Petrarchina, by Petrarch out of Jessie Agnes, by Macaroni. His sire was inbred to Glencoe through Vandal, and also took in the line of Gladiator through Queen Mary. He is perhaps a trifle on the small side, but he is big enough; and the very moderate fee of nine guineas demanded for his services should ensure his list being full.

McYardley is still at work; but it is to be hoped that Mr. Musker will not allow him to go abroad when he decides to send him to the stud, for he is, perhaps, the best horse we have in

the country to keep the line of Sweetmeat alive. He is, as his picture well shows, a beautifully-proportioned animal, with wonderful symmetry, and is full of bloodlike quality.

Other Herod horses that occur to mind are old Sea Song and Engineer. It may have been forgotten that Sea Song won some twenty races, and was placed in about forty others. He is standing at the Old Lodge, Salisbury, at the fee of five guineas. Engineer was a pretty good winner himself. His services are to be had free, gratis, and for nothing, so I understand, at Whitehall, Crawley, Suffolk. Loved One, now standing at the Beenham Stud, near Reading, and Dinna Forget, whose performances will still be fresh in the memory of racegoers, are by no means to be forgotten in the list of Herod horses.

It is sincerely to be hoped that breeders will seriously consider the vital importance of Herod blood. There is no reason whatever to doubt but that the crossing of it with that of Eclipse will be just as successful in the future as it was in the past, long before the present craze for "fashion" set in with such unmitigated fury. T. H. B.



W. A. Rouch. *OCEAN WAVE.* Copyright

IN THE GARDEN.

THE PRIMROSE AND POLYANTHUS TIME.

THE opening of the Primrose flower is a herald of the coming of spring and summer days. In a warm corner of a copse we discovered the first Primrose before February had dawned, but at the moment of writing this same copse is a carpet of yellow, with here and there the pale lilac of Ladies'-smock to make the picture wholly spring-like, a meeting of two flowers which form a perfect harmony of soft and beautiful colouring. This copse of Primrose, soon to disappear before the advancing hosts of Bluebells, reminded the writer of the great work that has been accomplished during recent years in raising varieties for the garden, known collectively as bunch Primroses, or what may be called very fine Polyanthuses. The bunch Primrose is one of the most effective of garden flowers in spring, and is bedded out in masses in gardens and in public parks. The stem rises strong and straight from the whorl of vigorous leaves, and supports a crown of flowers which for variety of colouring and bold size are unrivalled among the many families of plants which we use to adorn the garden. A faint perfume comes from this grouping of Primrose. It is borne on the spring air, and mingles with the warm fragrance of Wallflower and Auricula. We have recently received many varieties of the bunch Primrose, each grower claiming his selection to be the best; but none is so pure in colour, especially in the shades of yellow and orange, as the bunch Primroses we have seen on many spring days in Miss Jekyll's garden at Munstead. The plants are of remarkable vigour, and the stems hold a crowd of flowers of many colourings, sometimes of purest white, and sometimes as rich as a cut Apricot. This note is seasonable for more than one reason. The plants are in flower, but the seed will soon be ripe. When that happens, it may be sown, and our practice is to sow the seed in shallow pans or boxes, which are filled with soil such as one would put a Geranium in. The seed will quickly germinate if the box is placed in a cold frame, and when the seedlings are of sufficient size to handle with comfort, prick them out in a prepared piece of ground in the garden. It is necessary to watch carefully for slugs, which are very troublesome to the young and juicy seedlings. Early in autumn they will be large enough to go to the places they are to flower in during the following spring. The whole practice of Primrose or Polyanthus growing is quite simple; but how great is the pleasure to those who enjoy the opening of seedling flowers and have a deep love for the sweetest of all the plants that bloom in the sunny month of April!

SOWING SEEDS IN WALLS.

There is no better time than the present for sowing seeds in old and newly-built dry walls, and it is a form of gardening which grows in interest as the knowledge of the most suitable things for the purpose deepens. Sow the seeds in the crannies, or, if plants are used, make the roots quite firm and to go right into the available space. When this is finished, syringe gently, especially in the evening after a warm day. A north or east exposure is most relished by the plants, and a southern aspect most disliked, especially in the Southern Counties. The heat is too great for the majority of alpines. It is wise to mix the seeds with the soil before, as then there is little risk of the seed being blown away or eaten by birds. There is a wide choice of flowers for this purpose, but it is well not to over-plant a wall, but group the colours here and there, with the object of creating quite a natural effect. Alyssum saxatile, Arabis albida, the Aubrietias, Red Valerian (Centranthus ruber), the alpine or rock Pinks, Iberises, Campanulas, Wallflowers, Antirrhinum, Sedums, Saxifragas in great variety, Draba aizoides, Thrift, Cerastium, and Corydalis nobilis must all be included in the list.

RANDOM NOTES.

Annual Climbers. — Many beginners in gardening, especially those who commence in spring, when it is almost too late to plant perennial climbers, are desirous of sowing things to make a quick covering for an arbour, or to hide some unsightly object. Where the place to be covered is extensive there is nothing more suitable than the Japanese Hop, which is extraordinarily vigorous, and in a few months will overrun a large extent of pergola or whatever the object it is wished to hide with a bower of refreshing greenery. There is a variegated variety of this, but we prefer the normal form. The Canary Creeper (Tropæolum canariensis) is well known; it is the light green leaved climber to be seen in many gardens in summer, and the bright yellow flowers are in profusion for many months. The climbing Nasturtiums, or Tropæolums, and the pretty Convolvulus, minor and major, complete a short but useful list. Sow the seed at once.

Ivy on Trees.—It is always a debatable point whether the Ivy is hurtful to the tree round which it climbs, and many are interested in this question. In a recent number of *Flora and Sylva* a correspondent signing "J. S." agrees that "Ivy is not so hurtful to trees as is generally supposed, but . . . much depends on the tree it grows upon. On umbrageous trees with foliage giving deep shade, Ivy never makes way enough to do any harm. It is a plant that loves the light, and will not grow fast or well under the branches of a Sycamore or a Beech, for example. With scanty-foliaged trees, however, it is different. Many years ago we had Ivy planted against the stems of the trees in many places, and it has been growing with the trees as they grew. On the Birch it grows fast, and some of these have, in the course of time, been all but covered from bottom to top. We have other trees of the same kind and age, and much larger ones also, but they are in good health; these have no Ivy upon them. The Birch being a scanty-leaved tree, the Ivy grows fast upon it and overmasters it. The tree upon which it thrives next best is the Larch, and we have old ones of these showing an even and tapering column of Ivy about 70ft. high. They are about eighty years of age, and the Ivy upon them cannot be much younger. On the Ash the Ivy makes some progress, and some of our trees are clothed to near the top with it, side limbs and all. On the other trees that have good and ample foliage it never makes much headway, and we have no example of it in the Beech worth speaking of. It thrives on Scotch Fir, but on the Sycamore it is either dead or dying in most instances."

Shortia galacifolia.—At a recent meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society this delightful hardy plant was shown by several exhibitors, but in one instance a variety called rosea. The type has flowers of purest white, but in the variety they were of the softest shell pink, a shade so exquisite and unusual that we are looking forward to the little colony of it flowering next spring. The Shortia delights in a moist, but not waterlogged, peaty soil, the kind of place that the Japanese Primrose and Bog Myrtle revel in, but it will also succeed on the rock garden. Not only are the flowers beautiful, but the leaves are shades of chocolate and crimson, and sometimes quite a self crimson.

Eugenia Ugni.—"A Subscriber" asks a question about this plant: "Should it be grown in a greenhouse or planted out in the open border? The position is near the sea in a South-West English county." Perhaps some reader who has had experience of this plant would help our correspondent. The following reference to it occurs in "The Fruit Garden": "Eugenia Ugni is a compact little shrub, not unlike a Myrtle or a Box, which grows freely in a greenhouse, or even in the open air in the warmer parts of this country. In the garden of Colonel Tremayne at Carclew, near Falmouth, it forms a hedge, and its fruits are gathered annually to be used as dessert or for preserving. They are about the size of Black Currants, and not unlike that fruit in flavour, but they are less juicy and more aromatic. They are said to make a delicious drink. The plant is a native of Chili, but it is now widely distributed in sub-tropical countries. It is easily propagated from seeds or cuttings."



COVNTRY HOMES

SUDBURY HALL, DERBY,

THE SEAT OF . . .

LORD VERNON.

IN the ancient church of All Souls at Sudbury in Derbyshire, may be seen the recumbent effigies of two ladies, whose wimpled heads rest upon lozenge-shaped cushions, and whose hearts are held in their hands. These worn and silent figures represent, as is believed, and as can scarcely be doubted, ladies of the ancient house of Montgomery, which was seated for some centuries at Sudbury, and whose heritage passed in marriage with a richly-dowered heiress to a branch of the Vernons of Haddon. The Montgomerys had struck deep roots into the soil of this favoured region of England, and their possessions were at Sudbury, where they had a park in Plantagenet times, Cubley, where they had a residence, Hill Somersal, Marston Montgomery, and other places in South Derbyshire and Stafford. In the twelfth century John de Montgomery gave lands in Sudbury to Tutbury Priory, and his descendants were knights of the shire, and men of wealth and position, the last of the line being Sir John Montgomery, who died in 1513. His estates were partitioned amongst his three daughters and co-heiresses, Sudbury passing to Sir John Vernon, who married the eldest of them. The knight was a younger son of that Sir Henry Vernon of Haddon who acted as governor to Prince Arthur, and who signed the Prince's marriage articles with Catherine of Aragon, and he was uncle to the famous Sir George Vernon, "King of the Peak," whose daughter, Dorothy Vernon, eloped, as the story goes, with John Manners, and whose homely effigy may still be seen in Bakewell Church, making the visitor bethink himself how much of romance and poetry may exist in the life of everyday.

Sir John Vernon, the first of his family to be seated at Sudbury, was of the King's Council for Wales. His son Henry succeeded him, and, like himself and many other Vernons, married an heiress, the daughter of Sir Humphrey Swinnerton. Henry's elder son, John Vernon, died without issue at the age of sixty-one in 1600, having married Mary (Littelton), widow of his kinsman, Walter Vernon of Houndshill. His effigy in plate armour, with a ruff, may be seen under an arch in Sudbury Church, and beneath it, on an altar tomb, that of his wife. She was a prudent lady who did much to redeem the family estates, which had become somewhat involved, and in her time the present Sudbury Hall was built, apparently about twelve years after her husband's death. The site chosen, probably that of an earlier mansion, was superb, for the house looked out, as it does now, across the beautiful valley of the lower Dove to the green recesses of the Forest of Needwood, where grow some of the finest oaks and hollies in England. Mistress Mary Vernon did not build and adorn the splendid abode for herself, but for those who were to come after her. The heiress was her niece, Margaret Vernon, sole daughter of her husband's brother, Henry, and this lady married Sir Edward Vernon of Houndshill (born in 1584, died in 1657), son of Mistress Mary



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THE SOUTH-WEST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright SOUTH-EAST END OF THE LONG GALLERY. "COUNTRY LIFE."

Vernon's first husband. From this marriage Lord Vernon is descended. The first peer was George Vernon, created Lord Vernon, Baron of Kinderton, in 1762, who prefixed the name of Venables to his own on inheriting the great Cheshire estates of Peter Venables, last Baron of Kinderton. Lord Vernon married, as his first wife, the daughter and co-heiress of the second Lord Howard of Effingham, and afterwards the sister and ultimate heiress of Simon, first Earl Harcourt.

The pictures which accompany this article will suggest that work was carried on, and often resumed, in perfecting and beautifying the house during a great many years. Indeed, the successive Lords Vernon have made Sudbury Hall what it is. In the time of the fifth baron it was for a few years the residence of Queen Adelaide, and his successor repaired and greatly beautified and improved the house and estate. Thus, in the hands of its successive owners Sudbury Hall became a treasure-house of art, was adorned with a noble library, and was enriched with beautiful grounds.

The edifice is expressive externally, in every line and detail, of the age in which it was built; and it will be noticed that in carvings, plaster-work, and other adornments within it rivals the best work of the age, while presenting many features and adornments which later care has bestowed upon it. In the grouping of its structural masses we discern a tendency to transition, the picturesqueness of the Jacobean style, to which it belongs, being, perhaps, less noticeable than the simplicity and symmetry of its forms, which seem as if they foreshadowed the later, more formal, classic manner. The material of which the house is built is a warm red brick of pleasant tone, with a darker lozenge pattern worked in, and there are stone dressings and details which give variety. In the illustration of the north-east front it will be observed that the porch, erected in two stages, is a very remarkable piece of Jacobean architecture. The round-arched doorway is flanked by double columns, resting on panelled bases and supporting a cornice and segmental pediment, which give space below for two niches of very unusual character, and a shield supported by two cherubs and enframed by most delicate and beautiful Renaissance carving. The general arrangement is repeated in the upper stage, but with changes which give freshness and individuality. A wonderful example of fine stonework and of the sculptor's skill is this excellent porch. In the symmetrical character of the central block of the Hall, with its projecting wings, surrounding balustrade, and bold roofs and chimneys, rising to the circular lantern, there is infinite charm arising from the combination of unity with variety. The same bold and yet simple character gives distinction to the south-west front, which rises with dignity of form above the gardens which it surveys.



Copyright *THE DRAWING-ROOM: THE WORK OF GRINLING GIBBONS.* "C.L."

When we enter the house we are impressed with its splendour and elaboration. Evidently the best of craftsmen have here expended their skill, and Grinling Gibbons, the master wood-carver, has had rivals in the plaster-workers and ceiling painters. The restoration of the house about the year 1876 did much to add to the charm, but we look in vain for any incongruity. There is, we think, nowhere a better example of the later Renaissance as displayed in internal design. The entrance-hall and stairway are grand in style and execution. The framing of the doorway of the saloon is a magnificent example of classic work in wood, with finely-sculptured Corinthian fluted columns, graceful wreaths of fruit and flowers, and an interrupted pediment to give place to a bust. Notice again the splendour of the carving of the stairway, with its massive scrolls of fruit and floral adornment in bold and free forms, to support its richly-wrought handrail. Carved newel-posts, bearing baskets of fruit, are a part of this wealth of craftsmanship, and the splendid moulded plaster adornments of the ceiling are not anywhere surpassed. The sculptor's chisel and the moulder's tool have never done better work.

The harmonious richness of the saloon makes a feast for the eye, and beautiful French furniture, clocks, and bronzes add to the interest and charm of the interior. The wall-panels enframe fine portraits of ladies of the house of Vernon and others, the ceiling is magnificent, and the whole of the work, as will be seen, is of the utmost elaboration. But, perhaps, the staircase may claim precedence for nobility. Upon its walls hang many portraits of famous men and beauteous women, for



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE STAIRWAY.

Copyright



Copyright

THE ENTRANCE TO THE SALOON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



THE NORTH HALL.

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Strafford and others, whose names are in all our histories, have their place in the great collection. The ceiling above is magnificent in its work in plaster—the cavetto, as a cornice with festoons of flowers and fruits, and the deep moulded panelling, extraordinarily elaborate, all enframing a splendidly enwreathed ceiling-painting, than which Verrio never produced a better. What could we say more of the magnificent craftsmanship we are privileged to illustrate? The Long Gallery, which has an extent of 145ft., is a famous apartment, resembling in plan the long galleries of the sixteenth century, but a marvel of richness in a style they never knew. Here again is a ceiling in circular panels which almost defies description; the walls are lined with a fine library, and with many notable pictures; the Chippendale and other furniture is of great interest, and rich rugs clothe the polished floor, making an interior of infinite charm, and a perfect composition in detail and harmonious colour. Another chamber that deserves special mention is the Queen's Room, so called from having been occupied by Queen Adelaide during her residence at Sudbury, from 1840 to 1843. A fine marble mantel, a richly-worked chimney-piece, a grand ceiling, and a fine carved tester-bedstead are its features.



Copyright

CEILING OF THE NORTH HALL.

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But it is impossible to describe the multitude of interesting and valuable things which give such distinction to the interior of Sudbury Hall. There is a noble collection of pictures, including fine examples of the Italian schools, by Domenechino and other great artists, and many works of the Dutch and English schools, the portraits being particularly noticeable. Details of oak carving are admirable, as will be seen, and the



CORNER OF THE SALOON.

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splendid framing of the mirror in the drawing-room by Grinling Gibbons, being marvellous work in dead game, fish, fruit, and flowers, all sculptured to the very life, is as fine as anything that ever came from the great master's hand. The park covers about 600 acres, and the windows of the house on the south-west front have a delightful outlook over the lake and woods to the Dove and the sylvan region beyond.

THE TENDER-FOOT AFTER CHAMOIS.

IT is very probable that had certain chamois that were leaping about unconscious of all evil on the shady slopes of the D—— glen in the Dolomites, in August, 1903, known



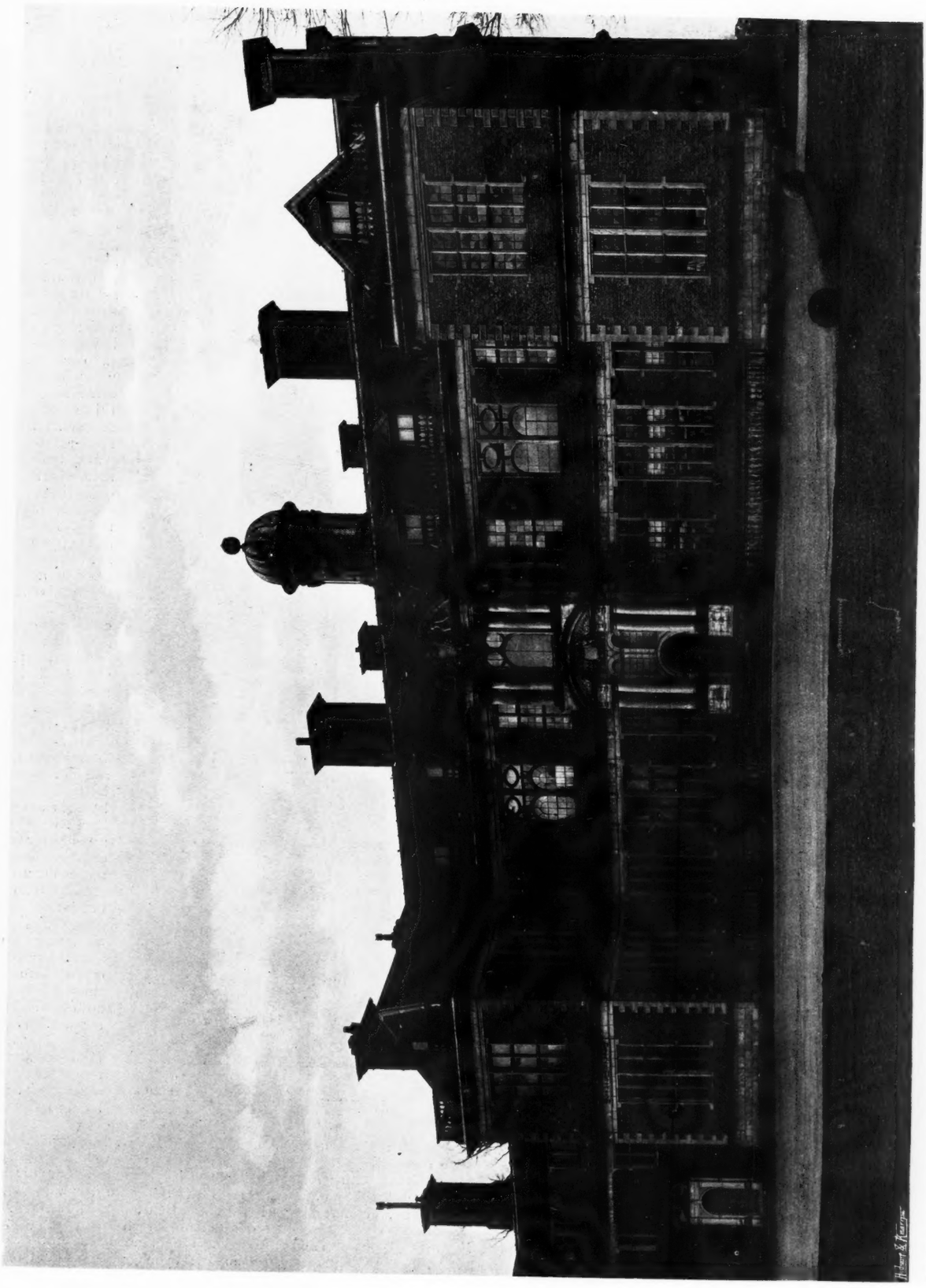
Copyright *SUDBURY HALL: THE QUEEN'S ROOM.* "COUNTRY LIFE."

the ado and hubbub stirred up to encompass their death, they would have rendered up their ghosts as well as their black little horns more readily than they did. Most of the great inventors of the age had worked for their destruction, one of the finest steam yachts in the world had ploughed across the Atlantic from New York to Havre, the swiftest Parisian motor-car that money could buy, the Atlantic cable, long-distance telephone lines, the Orient Express, the ingenious inventors of the Mannlicher, Mauser, Savage, and Winchester rifles, all had put forth their best efforts to secure for that Fifth Avenue mansion those prized trophies of the Austrian Alps, and a certain department of a great Empire's Government had been sorely perturbed on their account, while telegrams out of number had passed between New York and London and Paris and Vienna. But let me relate how it all came about.

Months before the opening of the shooting season my partner in a shooting I had leased the year before cabled to me from New York that he would join in sharing with me a certain promising Styrian shoot of which a Baron L. had offered me that season's lease. The share that X., my New York acquaintance, was to have consisted of forty chamois and two stags, and when August was already upon us X.'s steam yacht brought him and his cousin Y. to Havre, from whence their powerful motor was to take them on to the Styrian Valley. But, alas! even the best-matured plans can be upset by unexpected slips, and in this instance there was not one, but many. The first one was, unfortunately, as unusual as it was vexatious, for at the eleventh hour, to my utter consternation, I received the official information that as the aforesaid Baron had not the right to sublet the shoot without the sanction of the Government—it being Crown property—and that, as the permission for certain reasons was withheld, my lease of the place was off. A nice plight to be in! Here were the impatient young New Yorkers who had just landed at Havre, travelling I do not know how many thousand miles as fast as steam and electricity could carry them to shoot chamois, upon which the all-powerful ban of the paternal Austrian Government was resting! To cut short a very long story, we agreed to accept in lieu of the W—— ground another more extensive shoot in the Dolomites, adjoining a place I happened to have been shooting in the previous year. And as I knew all about it, I could therefore dispense with the personal inspection which, under ordinary circumstances, it is as well to institute before renting strange ground. The substituted shoot had attractions of its own, for the chamois there were much larger than the Styrian ones, and though, as there are no red deer in that part of the Alps, the stags had to be given up, X. and Y. got ten more chamois in lieu of the two latter. So they had no reason whatever for grumbling at the exchange which quite unavoidable causes had forced upon one.

Another misfortune overtook the New Yorkers while they were careering in their motor from Paris to Salzburg, when, in consequence of a too sudden change of the gear, the wheels "stripped," leaving the young chamois-hunters stranded on a dark night on the top of a lonely hill on the Vosges. The rest of the journey had therefore to be performed by the old-fashioned rail conveyance, *i.e.*, by the Orient Express and the Nord-Süd over the Brenner, while the two valets brought on from Paris a huge pile of luggage to D——, a small out-of-the-way railway station on the northern slopes of the Dolomites, close to which our shoot was situated. The little village of D—— was already sunk in sleep when, soon after nine o'clock one September evening, we wended our way on foot from the station to the principal inn, called the Post, while two country carts conveyed the luggage thither.

The Post, a square, solid-looking stone building, was one of those old-fashioned Tyrolese hostelries one still meets with in



SUDBURY HALL: THE NORTH-EAST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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the "undiscovered" parts of the country. The owners of these inns have every reason to regret the day on which the railway invaded the land, for it took from them all their many century old post-road business, and gave them but little in return save a few transient summer visitors or an occasional "cheap tripper" running for shelter at tariff rate. The advent of our party was therefore an event as unusual as it was fuss-causing, and the kindly old Frau Postmeisterin bustled about in a style betokening her anxiety to please the Herren who had come so far, so *very* far, as she persisted in saying, to shoot chamois. I am sure that, had the accident on the Vosges hills not invalided the motor, and we had arrived in this swift fiery car, the old lady would have lost her reason altogether. She had, as she told us, never seen a live American before, though, as she added, she had once seen a dead one in a travelling wax show, "ein gewisser Herr," by which she meant the effigy of "Lincoln."



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As there was only one other guest in the house, we all managed to get separate rooms, to which, after partaking of some supper, we retired to repack and put things into ship-shape for an early start on the morrow. Mine was a far easier task than theirs, for, notwithstanding my warning to take as little as possible, the head-keeper on seeing the huge pile of X. and Y.'s heterogeneous belongings, threw up his hands in astonishment, and declared that there weren't enough men in the whole village to carry it all up to the lodge, some two hours' climb from D——, other means of conveyance, on account of the steepness of the path, being out of the question. Hence a wholesale weeding out of unnecessary articles and superfluous outfit became necessary, and I am afraid to say at what hour of the morning the two valets got to their straw-stuffed "downies."

Apropos of outfits for chamois-shooting in Tyrol a line or two will suffice to enumerate the necessaries, but it would take pages to give an analysis of what not to bring, to judge by the things that the tenderfoot persists in carting out on such occasions. The former are a rifle with the shooting of which you are thoroughly familiar, ammunition that belongs to the rifle, stout boots "nailed" in a workmanlike manner, the oldest shooting clothes and knickerbockers of dark green or grey hue, a rubber bath, a rücksack, a telescope, and a stout bergstock of local growth and local "shodding." Among the paraphernalia not to bring are valets, lady's-maids, governesses, Saratoga trunks, huge tin baths, an armoury of various brand-new shooting-irons using different ammunition, none of which has been practically tested, Panama hats, or sun-helmets of a staring white, elaborate shooting toggery of a nice bright green with large red and blue check pattern, leather gaiters, gimcrack bamboo bergstocks, coils of Alpine Club rope, ice axes of the newest pattern, and game bags that dangle at one's side, and the loops of which, when ascending steep rocks, offer convenient traps to put one's foot in and send one head over heels down instead of up the declivity. I speak feelingly on this topic, for owing to my long residence in Austria, and the fact that I once scribbled somewhere that I had shot my first stag over here more than forty years ago, friends and acquaintances and their friends and acquaintances have turned me into a sort of "enquire within" concerning Austrian shooting matters. But to return to the outfit here more immediately in question X.'s experience, gained the previous year, had apparently not helped him as much as it might; his and his cousin's outfit was a very complete one for a motor tour, but hardly what was required for a chamois-hunting expedition. The latest thing in motor-goggles were not as useful as stout mountain-boots, and knicker-bockers would have been more appropriate for climbing after the wary mountain antelope than were burly-looking fur coats typical of the up-to-date motor swell. And as for rifles, there were sundry kinds and sorts—Winchesters, Savages, Mannlichers, and Mausers, amongst the latter one presented to the owner by an Emperor, and provided with telescopic sights, with the working of which neither sportsman was conversant. Now telescopic sights are invaluable aids, and to none more so than to the middle-aged afflicted with "long sight"; but they take a bit of practice, and one should know which way to turn the scale disc adjusting the range. Unfortunately I was unaware, until too late, of the fact that both the sportsmen were unfamiliar with their armoury, or I would have insisted on spending the forenoon at the little village rifle-range, and getting the impatient young chamois-hunters used to their fire-irons, preferably with one kind, for changing rifles is by no means expedient when once you have opened the campaign. As it was, the two enthusiasts entered the sacred ground with untried rifles, with results that were anything but satisfactory, for if there is any beast the missing of which should be as much as possible avoided, it is the ever-watchful little mountain gazelle, which resents disturbance by summarily leaving its home to seek quieter quarters elsewhere beyond the march. And

more than anything else does the chamois resent the insult of having lead pumped at it from magazine rifles. Twelve shots fired at intervals at different beasts in the course of a day's stalk disturbs chamois ground far less than half that number fired in quick succession in the usually ineffectual attempt to stop a vanishing buck. One such "firework" is enough to send the most home-loving old veteran buck for good and all over one's boundaries.

In the D—— shoot old bucks were unusually plentiful, for Prince Z., the owner of the ground, had never let it before, and had shot there but little himself, and for this reason X. and Y. could have secured among the fifty chamois they had to kill a number of veterans. That they failed in this and left the place after a five weeks' stay with only thirty-seven chamois and four roebucks to their credit, I ascribe solely to their using rifles with which they were not familiar, for they had no end of chances, and had to telegraph twice for fresh supplies of ammunition. Their keenness and willingness to undergo the fatigues and hardships of the sport availed them little so long as their aim remained uncertain. The main lodge, if one can apply that ambitious term to our primitive quarters, consisted of a kitchen-house, *i.e.*, a log structure 30ft. by 20ft., the rear part of which chamber was occupied by a bench 6ft. wide and slightly slanting, upon which hay was piled, and which formed the sleeping quarters of the three keepers and of several under-strappers. A short covered in passage connected it with the living-house, also constructed of logs squared on the outside, and this habitation was divided into a large central room with two bedrooms, while a garret overhead was intended for the cook. The latter, a very important personage under the circumstances, was a prepossessing young Viennese of the female persuasion whom an agency had engaged for me. To quarter our three selves, two valets, three keepers, and several young fellows who acted as messengers, attended to the boots, firewood, etc., in such narrow quarters and fit in the cook, with due regard to decorum, was a puzzle in itself, but all would have gone well had it not been for a very harmless-looking ladder. When the virtuous Anna discovered that the only means of gaining her bower was by this ladder, she threw a bombshell into our circle by categorically refusing to ascend it, and threatened to leave us that instant and return to D—— by the light of a lantern if no fitter quarters for her could be improvised. Here was a dilemma of the worst kind, and what was even worse, the revolt was threatening to spread further, the two immaculate valets holding also discouraging views concerning the primitiveness of their sleeping quarters. The loss of the cook would have meant very lean fare indeed for many a day, Vienna being the nearest place where a substitute could be found. And were those glorious appetites, so dearly bought by long days' climbing, to go begging? Was that craving for eatable food to be satisfied with a greasy *Schmarn*, a *plat* that would hardly have proved acceptable to palates that cavilled at the Carlton *chef*, and that had fault to find with the *cuisine* of Ritz and of the Waldorf? And all because a young person would not ascend a ladder so long as those two fashionable valets were anywhere in the vicinity!

"Keep your wool on!" is a useful axiom to remember for daily life, whether our difficulties be with aggressive Russians or with angry domestics as worth humouring as was this precious cook. After some palaver, I prevailed on virtuous Anna at least to cook us that evening's dinner, for we were all ravenous. This she did. A more happy post-prandial mood and some judicious praise of her dishes, as well as a bottle of country wine and certain monetary promises, at last helped to solve the difficulty. It was finally achieved by a bit of cord. By its means a blanket or two were so draped from the rafters as to turn one corner of the kitchen into a *chambre separé*, where Anna declared she would deign to bower if all the unmarried men were sent to sleep elsewhere. This was achieved by bedding out the two valets in our sitting-room, and turning the garret into a bachelors' chamber. Thus peace in the domestic circle was restored, and, with the exception of the roof, which leaked into our beds when it rained very hard, and windows which, when it blew very hard, did not keep out the wind as effectually as they probably had done in their younger days, everything was now running smoothly—the chamois, unfortunately, also!

Of the ten or eleven thousand chamois that are annually killed in Austria, a considerable portion are shot in drives, a form of sport that is still fashionable, though it seems probable that the increased commercial value of good chamois ground—and in bad ground driving is exceedingly poor fun—will gradually bring about changes in this respect; for, of course, stalking is far better sport. Now that every chamois, by the time it lies on the grass in front of your hut, costs you a £10 note, shooting down eighty or ninety in one drive, as is done in some of the most extensive preserves, becomes a millionaire's pleasure, and a selfish one at that. For the fact that one has so many beasts on one's ground means the closest nursing, the most vigilant watching by a great staff of keepers, and perfect tranquillity during 364 days of the 365; which again means that your less fortunate neighbour's chamois, that have not been quite so undisturbed, will flock to the quiet ground, to the obvious detriment of the man beyond your march.

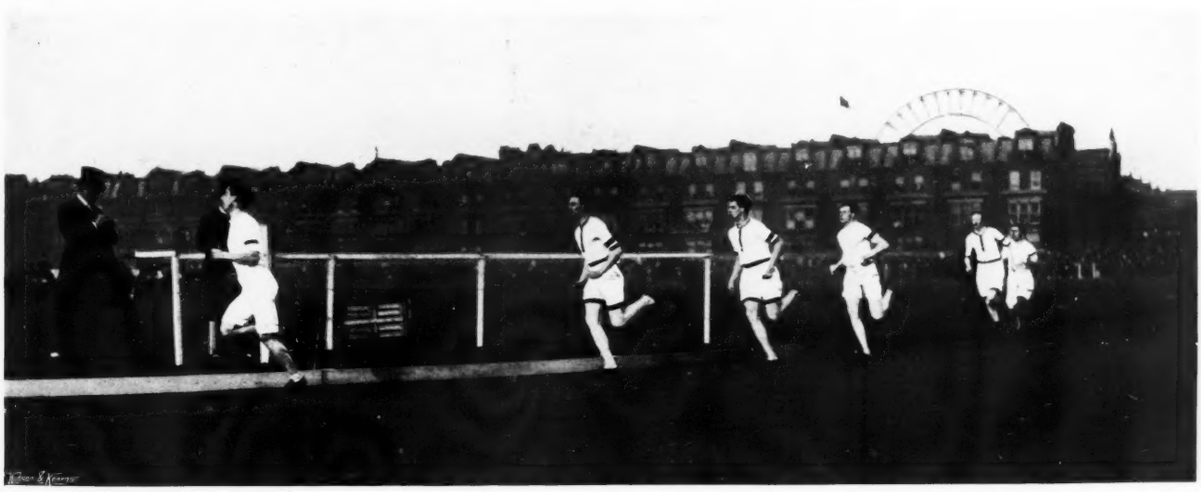
Nature, in such cases of overstocking, has a remedy of her own to punish the "chamois-hog," for epidemics, notably the mange and anthrax, invariably sooner or later put in their appearance, with results that are often disastrous in the extreme; for, as it is impossible to kill off the sick beasts as quickly as one could in the case of domestic or semi-domestic animals, these epidemics frequently take years to run their course, and more years will elapse before the ground recovers from such a visitation. The sporadic appearance of these scourges makes it necessary for the foreigner desirous of renting a chamois-shoot to be careful in this respect, a bit of advice which I give feelingly, for notwithstanding the many facilities at my disposal, I was once taken in myself, and renewed a lease of a place where the mange had broken out a few months previously.

Chamois-stalking is often called the sport for kings; but to be successful the said kings should be fairly active men who do not need two men in front hauling at ropes, and one man behind pushing, to get up slopes, as we see in some old pictures; and they must be willing and able to put up with the rough sides of a sport that has no equal, at any rate in Europe.

W. A. Baillie-Grohman.

THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE GAMES.

DECIDEDLY this is Oxford's year. Before winning the Boat Race this University had the satisfaction of overcoming Cambridge at Queen's Club, West Kensington, by the substantial margin of 6½ events to 3½. It was expected to be a very close contest, with the advantage slightly in favour of Cambridge; but as in the case of the Boat Race, the men of that University seemed to have been slightly over-trained. An idea was current that in several of the events the two Universities would be close together, but until within two days of the



W. A. Rouch. FIRST LAP OF THE THREE-MILE RACE, WON BY A. S. D. SMITH (CAMBRIDGE). Copyright

the "undiscovered" parts of the country. The owners of these inns have every reason to regret the day on which the railway invaded the land, for it took from them all their many century old post-road business, and gave them but little in return save a few transient summer visitors or an occasional "cheap tripper" running for shelter at tariff rate. The advent of our party was therefore an event as unusual as it was fuss-causing, and the kindly old Frau Postmeisterin bustled about in a style betokening her anxiety to please the Herren who had come so far, so *very* far, as she persisted in saying, to shoot chamois. I am sure that, had the accident on the Vosges hills not invalided the motor, and we had arrived in this swift fiery car, the old lady would have lost her reason altogether. She had, as she told us, never seen a live American before, though, as she added, she had once seen a dead one in a travelling wax show, "ein gewisser Herr," by which she meant the effigy of "Lincoln."



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Apropos of outfits for chamois-shooting in Tyrol a line or two will suffice to enumerate the necessaries, but it would take pages to give an analysis of what not to bring, to judge by the things that the tenderfoot persists in carting out on such occasions. The former are a rifle with the shooting of which you are thoroughly familiar, ammunition that belongs to the rifle, stout boots "nailed" in a workmanlike manner, the oldest shooting clothes and knickerbockers of dark green or grey hue, a rubber bath, a rücksack, a telescope, and a stout bergstock of local growth and local "shodding." Among the paraphernalia not to bring are valets, lady's-maids, governesses, Saratoga trunks, huge tin baths, an armoury of various brand-new shooting-irons using different ammunition, none of which has been practically tested, Panama hats, or sun-helmets of a staring white, elaborate shooting toggery of a nice bright green with large red and blue check pattern, leather gaiters, gimcrack bamboo bergstocks, coils of Alpine Club rope, ice axes of the newest pattern, and game bags that dangle at one's side, and the loops of which, when ascending steep rocks, offer convenient traps to put one's foot in and send one head over heels down instead of up the declivity. I speak feelingly on this topic, for owing to my long residence in Austria, and the fact that I once scribbled somewhere that I had shot my first stag over here more than forty years ago, friends and acquaintances and their friends and acquaintances have turned me into a sort of "enquire within" concerning Austrian shooting matters. But to return to the outfit here more immediately in question. X.'s experience, gained the previous year, had apparently not helped him as much as it might; his and his cousin's outfit was a very complete one for a motor tour, but hardly what was required for a chamois-hunting expedition. The latest thing in motor-goggles were not as useful as stout mountain-boots, and knicker-bockers would have been more appropriate for climbing after the wary mountain antelope than were burly-looking fur coats typical of the up-to-date noor swell. And as for rifles, there were sundry kinds and sorts—Winchesters, Savages, Mannlichers, and Mausers, amongst the latter one presented to the owner by an Emperor, and provided with telescopic sights, with the working of which neither sportsman was conversant. Now telescopic sights are invaluable aids, and to none more so than to the middle-aged afflicted with "long sight"; but they take a bit of practice, and one should know which way to turn the scale disc adjusting the range. Unfortunately I was unaware, until too late, of the fact that both the sportsmen were unfamiliar with their armoury, or I would have insisted on spending the forenoon at the little village rifle-range, and getting the impatient young chamois-hunters used to their fire-irons, preferably with one kind, for changing rifles is by no means expedient when once you have opened the campaign. As it was, the two enthusiasts entered the sacred ground with untried rifles, with results that were anything but satisfactory, for if there is any beast the missing of which should be as much as possible avoided, it is the ever-watchful little mountain gazelle, which resents disturbance by summarily leaving its home to seek quieter quarters elsewhere beyond the march. And

more than anything else does the chamois resent the insult of having lead pumped at it from magazine rifles. Twelve shots fired at intervals at different beasts in the course of a day's stalk disturbs chamois ground far less than half that number fired in quick succession in the usually ineffectual attempt to stop a vanishing buck. One such "firework" is enough to send the most home-loving old veteran buck for good and all over one's boundaries.

In the D—— shoot old bucks were unusually plentiful, for Prince Z., the owner of the ground, had never let it before, and had shot there but little himself, and for this reason X. and Y. could have secured among the fifty chamois they had to kill a number of veterans. That they failed in this and left the place after a five weeks' stay with only thirty-seven chamois and four roebucks to their credit, I ascribe solely to their using rifles with which they were not familiar, for they had no end of chances, and had to telegraph twice for fresh supplies of ammunition. Their keenness and willingness to undergo the fatigues and hardships of the sport availed them little so long as their aim remained uncertain. The main lodge, if one can apply that ambitious term to our primitive quarters, consisted of a kitchen-house, *i.e.*, a log structure 30ft. by 20ft., the rear part of which chamber was occupied by a bench 6ft. wide and slightly slanting, upon which hay was piled, and which formed the sleeping quarters of the three keepers and of several under-strappers. A short covered in passage connected it with the living-house, also constructed of logs squared on the outside, and this habitation was divided into a large central room with two bedrooms, while a garret overhead was intended for the cook. The latter, a very important personage under the circumstances, was a prepossessing young Viennese of the female persuasion whom an agency had engaged for me. To quarter our three selves, two valets, three keepers, and several young fellows who acted as messengers, attended to the boots, firewood, etc., in such narrow quarters and fit in the cook, with due regard to decorum, was a puzzle in itself, but all would have gone well had it not been for a very harmless-looking ladder. When the virtuous Anna discovered that the only means of gaining her bower was by this ladder, she threw a bombshell into our circle by categorically refusing to ascend it, and threatened to leave us that instant and return to D—— by the light of a lantern if no fitter quarters for her could be improvised. Here was a dilemma of the worst kind, and what was even worse, the revolt was threatening to spread further, the two immaculate valets holding also discouraging views concerning the primitiveness of their sleeping quarters. The loss of the cook would have meant very lean fare indeed for many a day, Vienna being the nearest place where a substitute could be found. And were those glorious appetites, so dearly bought by long days' climbing, to go begging? Was that craving for eatable food to be satisfied with a greasy *Schmarn*, a *plat* that would hardly have proved acceptable to palates that cavilled at the Carlton *chef*, and that had fault to find with the *cuisine* of Ritz and of the Waldorf? And all because a young person would not ascend a ladder so long as those two fashionable valets were anywhere in the vicinity!

"Keep your wool on!" is a useful axiom to remember for daily life, whether our difficulties be with aggressive Russians or with angry domestics as worth humouring as was this precious cook. After some palaver, I prevailed on virtuous Anna at least to cook us that evening's dinner, for we were all ravenous. This she did. A more happy post-prandial mood and some judicious praise of her dishes, as well as a bottle of country wine and certain monetary promises, at last helped to solve the difficulty. It was finally achieved by a bit of cord. By its means a blanket or two were so draped from the rafters as to turn one corner of the kitchen into a *chambre separé*, where Anna declared she would deign to bower if all the unmarried men were sent to sleep elsewhere. This was achieved by bedding out the two valets in our sitting-room, and turning the garret into a bachelors' chamber. Thus peace in the domestic circle was restored, and, with the exception of the roof, which leaked into our beds when it rained very hard, and windows which, when it blew very hard, did not keep out the wind as effectually as they probably had done in their younger days, everything was now running smoothly—the chamois, unfortunately, also!

Of the ten or eleven thousand chamois that are annually killed in Austria, a considerable portion are shot in drives, a form of sport that is still fashionable, though it seems probable that the increased commercial value of good chamois ground—and in bad ground driving is exceedingly poor fun—will gradually bring about changes in this respect; for, of course, stalking is far better sport. Now that every chamois, by the time it lies on the grass in front of your hut, costs you a £ to note, shooting down eighty or ninety in one drive, as is done in some of the most extensive preserves, becomes a millionaire's pleasure, and a selfish one at that. For the fact that one has so many beasts on one's ground means the closest nursing, the most vigilant watching by a great staff of keepers, and perfect tranquillity during 364 days of the 365; which again means that your less fortunate neighbour's chamois, that have not been quite so undisturbed, will flock to the quiet ground, to the obvious detriment of the man beyond your march.

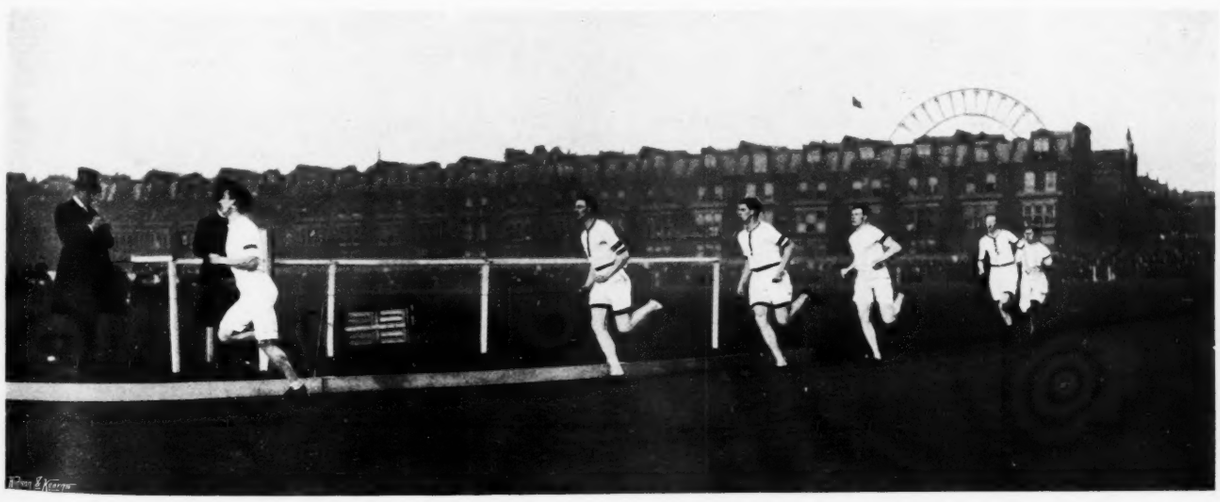
Nature, in such cases of overstocking, has a remedy of her own to punish the "chamois-hog," for epidemics, notably the mange and anthrax, invariably sooner or later put in their appearance, with results that are often disastrous in the extreme; for, as it is impossible to kill off the sick beasts as quickly as one could in the case of domestic or semi-domestic animals, these epidemics frequently take years to run their course, and more years will elapse before the ground recovers from such a visitation. The sporadic appearance of these scourges makes it necessary for the foreigner desirous of renting a chamois-shoot to be careful in this respect, a bit of advice which I give feelingly, for notwithstanding the many facilities at my disposal, I was once taken in myself, and renewed a lease of a place where the mange had broken out a few months previously.

Chamois-stalking is often called the sport for kings; but to be successful the said kings should be fairly active men who do not need two men in front hauling at ropes, and one man behind pushing, to get up slopes, as we see in some old pictures; and they must be willing and able to put up with the rough sides of a sport that has no equal, at any rate in Europe.

W. A. Baillie-Grohman.

THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE GAMES.

DECIDEDLY this is Oxford's year. Before winning the Boat Race this University had the satisfaction of overcoming Cambridge at Queen's Club, West Kensington, by the substantial margin of 6½ events to 3½. It was expected to be a very close contest, with the advantage slightly in favour of Cambridge; but as in the case of the Boat Race, the men of that University seemed to have been slightly over-trained. An idea was current that in several of the events the two Universities would be close together, but until within two days of the



W. A. Rouch. FIRST LAP OF THE THREE-MILE RACE, WON BY A. S. D. SMITH (CAMBRIDGE). Copyright

meeting it was believed that Cambridge held the advantage They seemed certain to win the Weight, the High Jump, and the Three Miles, while their prospects for the 100 Yards, the Mile, and the Long Jump looked at least as good as those of their opponents. But this forecast was utterly upset. Oxford won the 100 Yards Race, the Quarter-Mile, the Mile, the Long Jump, and Throwing the Hammer; while Cambridge had to be content with securing the supremacy in the Three Miles, the Hurdles, and Putting the Weight. The High Jump ending in a tie made the halves which show in the totals. It was a very pleasant function, both the Prince and Princess of Wales being present, and the weather being all that could be desired. A slight wind was blowing, but it was not so strong as to interfere with the comfort of the spectators or the efforts of the competitors. In looking back, we see that the most important event was the Mile Race, in which Mr. Welsh met Mr. Henderson-Hamilton; the latter won in very fine style, doing the mile in 4min. 17 4-5sec. The previous record had been made in 1894 by Mr. W. E. Lutyens, who took 2sec. more to cover the distance. The race was pluckily run, and Mr. Welsh made a splendid effort in the straight to get on terms with his swift opponent; but Mr. Henderson-Hamilton had too much in hand, and came in a winner by several yards. Mr. Morrell, who was not regarded as the best that Oxford could produce, defeated Mr. Cornwallis in the Quarter-Mile. Mr. Morrell had already won the 100 Yards, so that he may be said to have covered himself with distinction. In the Three-Mile Race, Mr. A. S. D. Smith gave a decided beating to Mr. Schutt. In the Half-Mile, Mr. Cornwallis, who, as we have said, was defeated in the Quarter-Mile, came off an easy victor, through his opponent, Mr. Crabbe, falling. The High Jump proved to be rather a disappointment. Mr. Leader had shown such good form in the two previous years that his friends expected him to do something wonderful on this occasion; but he failed absolutely to get over a height of more than 5ft. 7in., and had to be contented with dividing honours with his opponent. Something of the same kind happened in Throwing the Hammer. Mr. Fyffe had done so excellently in practice that great things were expected of him, and so his throw of over 120ft., though most creditable to him, was somewhat in the nature of a disappointment to the lookers-on.



Copyright *THREE MILES: SECOND LAP.* "COUNTRY LIFE."



W. A. Kouch. *FINISH OF THE ONE HUNDRED YARDS.* Copyright
J. H. Morrell (Oxford), Winner.

Such, briefly epitomised, are the results of the day's competitions, and they cannot fail to lead the thoughtful reader to a consideration of the part played by athletics in the development and education of English youth. Theoretical writers have often jeered at the amount of attention which is paid in England to merely physical prowess. In a celebrated passage in one of his writings, Mr. Ruskin talked as though the one thing taught young men in this country was to hit a ball with a bat, and he somewhat plaintively asked if they could plough with a steady hand; while we all know Mr. Rudyard Kipling's jeer at "the flannelled fools at the wicket" and "the muddied oafs" who play football. But in all this there is the exercise of a great deal of poetic licence. We know very well that the temptations nowadays are that a young man should not take exercise; where his grandfather walked he is taught to ride, it may be in a motor-car, a horsed carriage, a hansom, or even the homely bus; and so far has this gone that a philosopher has been known to speculate whether a time is not coming in which feet will have become of such little use as to have grown obsolete. So it is with the things we used to do with our hands. Machinery performs them all for us. Moreover, all who have ambition throng into the great towns, where they have no opportunity of patronising those manly sports which gave muscle and sinew to their country-loving forefathers. It may be quite true

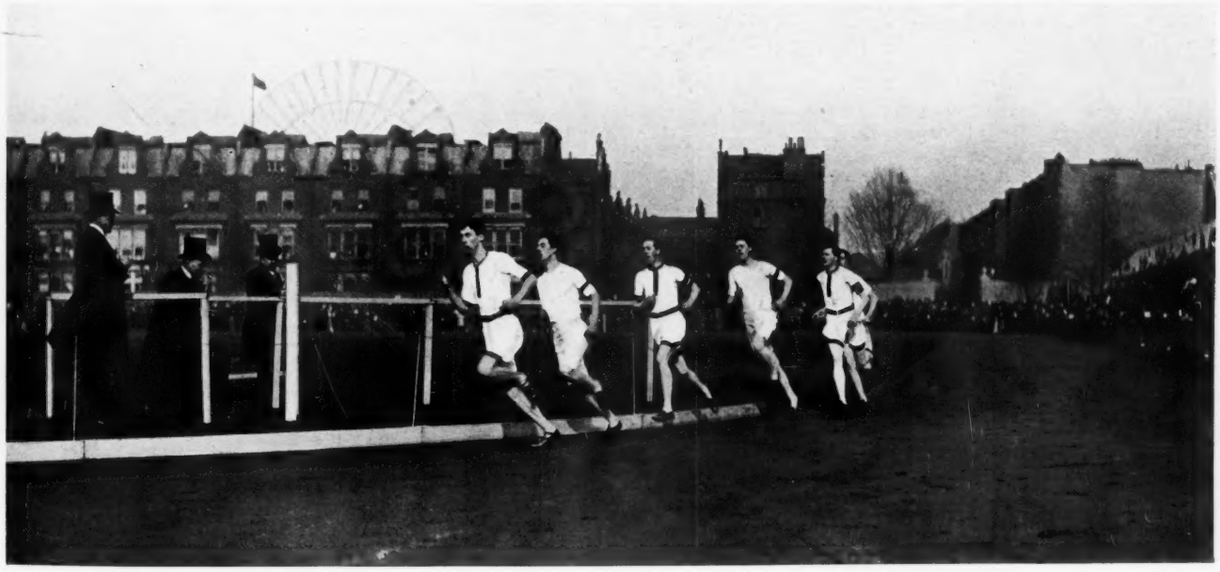


Copyright *HIGH JUMP: P. M. YOUNG (OXFORD) TIES.* "C.L."

that the boy who loves athletics has as much of them as he desires. There are a thousand clubs now to one that used to exist. Outdoor games have attained a popularity of which we have had no previous experience. If we take the golf clubs of the kingdom alone, they fill an enormous part in public life which used to be entirely vacant; but, after all, it is only a comparatively small section of the people that take part in these healthy, open-air amusements. The great majority are doomed to be mere lookers-on, and it is extremely doubtful whether, for example, the vast numbers of people who assemble to watch a game of football gain any definite advantage from doing so. The exercise, the healthy emulation, and the excitement are for the players alone. It is therefore impossible to avoid the conclusion that the encouragement of athletic exercises is a duty incumbent upon those who have charge of our educational institutions. According to the old Latin proverb, there ought to be a *mens sana in corpore sano*, and the latter is of quite as much importance as the former. Indeed, there is much reason to doubt whether a mind can possibly be really healthful if it be not enclosed in a healthy body. That is the real reason for encouraging athletics in our Universities; the men themselves who to-day are heroes of the river, the cricket field, the golf course, or the tennis court, may to-morrow be forgotten, but their influence goes on deepening and extending for ever. It is not the solitary winner of an athletic event that we look to, but the hundreds of other men who are induced by his example to devote some attention to physical culture, without which there can be no such thing as a healthy and vigorous community.



W. A. Rouch. *THE START FOR THE MILE.* Copyright



W. A. Rouch. *THE MILE, WON BY C. C. HENDERSON-HAMILTON (OXFORD).* Copyright

FROM THE FARMS.

Agricultural Education in Somerset.

THE welcome and healthy activity in regard to educational matters which has been developed in country districts recently is well exemplified by the report issued from the Somerset County Council. The local authorities are taking most practical measures for the inculcation of a sound agricultural education. They have obtained a farm for experimental purposes, and appointed a County Inspector in Agriculture, who has been giving a course of lectures at central villages. To speak frankly, this is part of the programme to which we do not attach much importance. Lecturing was tried to an enormous extent in regard to dairying, but it still remains a fact that the worst butter sold in an average market town is home made. Of course, we know nothing of the individual lecturer for the county in question, and can only hope that his words will bear more fruit than experience gives us reason to expect. The field experiments which have been conducted in various parts of the county are more likely to be useful. Experiments in a college are all very well, but they are very much more valuable when conducted on a farmer's own land and under his own nose, so to speak. Again, the cheese school and the butter school are admirable institutions which ought to have a decided effect on the dairying of the district. The agricultural scholarships are also likely to do much good by developing individual talent. The arrangements for teaching gardening are very thorough, and consist partly of lecturing, partly of demonstrations in continuation school gardens. Great care, too, is being exercised in the teaching of poultry-keeping, and, generally speaking, it must be conceded that the county councils are doing their best to give the country children the teaching they ought to have.

Sending Queen Bees by Post.

From an interesting pamphlet by Mr. F. W. L. Sladen, called "Queen Rearing in England," we quote a paragraph that will be read with interest by those who have not yet begun to pay much attention to this industry: "The postal regulations of the United Kingdom, and of most other civilised countries, now allow live bees to be sent by post, and a considerable number of queens are distributed in this way every summer. Formerly they were sent, accompanied by about 200 workers, in boxes containing small combs of honey, but now they are sent, accompanied by only

twelve to twenty workers, in small cages (introduced by Benton), containing a special kind of soft candy called 'queen candy.' The queen and her attendants will live for several days in one of these cages, and if carefully packed, even weeks, without injury; they will stand a wide range of temperature, and require very little ventilation, provided the cage is not overcrowded, there being always sufficient air in the mail-bags. These cages weigh only one or two ounces with the candy in them; the queens can therefore be forwarded by post to any address at a merely nominal cost." We need scarcely say that Mr. Sladen, who publishes from the office of the *British Bee Journal*, is thoroughly at home in his subject, and his book may be confidently recommended to the attention of bee-keepers.

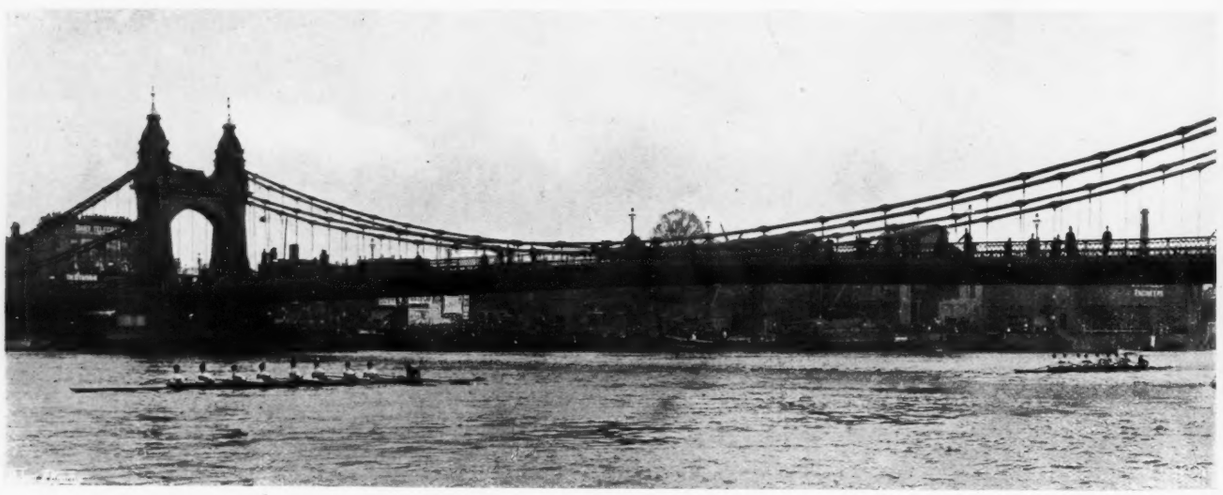
Farmers and Birds.

A lively controversy has been going on during the past week in the columns of our contemporary the *Standard*. It is well known that throughout the country clubs have recently been formed for the purpose of thinning down those wild creatures which have multiplied inordinately and are destructive of the farmer's crops. These are chiefly the sparrow, the rook, and the wood-pigeon; but in one of the reports it was mentioned that many of our singing birds have been killed also, and this has naturally aroused a good deal of irritation. In regard to the sparrow one has little to object to. This bird has increased most enormously, and we have seen five corn crops completely destroyed by it. The rook, too, has increased to a very great degree, and though on the whole we are inclined to think that rooks are of great benefit in destroying grubs, yet it is certain that where the numbers are very great they become a pest. There is, however, scarcely any other bird against which such operation could be justifiably carried on, and rat and sparrow clubs will bring themselves into ill-fame if, in attempting to get rid of well-known pests, they destroy other birds which are a perpetual delight to the lover of Nature. We know quite well that an indictment may be made out against many birds, including the beautiful little song-thrush; but so pleasant is it to hear the voice of this charming songster, and to watch him in the garden or shrubbery, that he ought not to be grudged the little payment that he exacts from the garden crops.

The Price of Wheat.

English farmers cannot but note with satisfaction the tendency of wheat to keep up to a reasonable price. It used to be an axiom among them that this cereal to be profitable should fetch at least 40s. a quarter; when it was under that figure the farmer did not believe he could grow it profitably; but the cost of production has decreased considerably during the past few years, and though, undoubtedly, it must vary with the district and the character of the soil, it may be assumed that the crop will be a remunerative one when the price is over 30s. a quarter. During the first three months of the present year the average has been just a trifle over that mark, viz., 30s. 4d., and there is every reason to believe that it will not readily fall again. For years supplies from abroad seemed to be continually on the increase, while the rates demanded were always growing less; but now the tide seems to have turned. The foreign and colonial supply is shrinking perceptibly already, and is likely to shrink very much more in the coming year. Thus the land which has been thrown out of wheat cultivation will gradually be brought in again by the increased demand, and the prudent English farmer who looks in front will do well to prepare for an entirely new state of things.

THE UNIVERSITY BOAT RACE.



W. A. Rouch. *OXFORD LEAD AT HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE.* Copyright

THE spectators lining and crowding the river on Saturday showed that whatever may have happened to other sports, the University Boat Race is still as popular as ever it was. The weather was decidedly in favour of the spectators. Some of the old stagers present had viewed this contest under very different conditions; they had seen it rowed in snow and sleet, they had seen the waves lashing as if driven by a hurricane, they had followed the battle while the blood was chilled with frost; but on Saturday there was nothing to mar the pleasure of the occasion. Early in the morning it was cold and cloudy, and had rain fallen the weather prophets would not have been disappointed. As a matter of fact, however, the sun came out pleasantly enough in the middle of the forenoon, and the air was quite mild in the middle portion of the day. The race itself provided one of those surprises of which sport is so productive. It had been freely stated beforehand that Cambridge had the better chance of winning, and it was generally believed that in any event the contest would be a close one. For some time before the Light Blues had shown to advantage in their



THE VICTORS.

training, although it has to be noted that experts were reduced to speculation, because the fashion nowadays is not to train nearly so much over the course as before, and judgment had to be formed on the general appearance and physique of the rival crews. The rowing in neither boat was as first-class as we have to expect in Oxford against Cambridge. The men were by no means deficient in muscle, but, as compared with those we have seen in former years, were decidedly lacking in finish and style. The advantage that Oxford had was in the vast improvement accomplished in the last few days, while the Cambridge men rowed as if they had been stale. It was not an interesting race at all. Oxford established a supremacy at the very start, and maintained it quietly and comfortably to the end. Wind and water were distinctly favourable to the rowers; the Thames was practically unruffled, and the light wind favoured the boats at the beginning. At Craven Steps Oxford were about a length ahead, and at the mile post this advantage had been increased to two lengths. This good start by Oxford was in large measure due to the fact that the stroke set them was 37 to the minute, while that of Cambridge was only 30 to the minute at one time. When they increased this pace it was observable that they failed to obtain proper advantage by it, because stroke showed a bad example in getting his oar too quickly out of the water, so that the stroke was not accurately finished. Above Hammersmith Bridge the crews had to row against a head wind, and the supporters of Cambridge thought that in these circumstances their greater weight would begin to tell. Any hopes based on this idea were, however, doomed to disappointment. Some of the experts present think that Mr. Thomas, the new man who is being tried, failed at a critical moment for want of training. Whatever the cause might be, Cambridge never made an effort that put a strain upon their opponents, who at Thornycroft's were three and a-half lengths ahead, and four at Barnes Bridge. Eventually Oxford won by three lengths. The final spurt of Cambridge was not good enough to bring them on terms with Oxford.



THE VANQUISHED.



THE DARK BLUES BRING IN THEIR SHIP.

It is idle to speculate about the causes that led to the downfall of Cambridge, but a plausible reason may be found in the fact that the men were somewhat overtrained. They came to Putney a week before the encounter perfectly fit to have rowed the race there and then, but an additional week's training did not make them more, but less, fit. Oxford, on the other hand, were rather behindhand in their preparations, but the week just sufficed to give them the requisite finish. It is greatly in their favour that several of the crew appeared for the first time, and, therefore, will form a good nucleus for future years. Particularly does this remark apply to Mr. Bucknall, the Oxford stroke. He is a freshman, and those are probably not far wrong who declare that he is the best freshman stroke who has ever been seen at Putney. Some criticism has been directed against the stroke of the Cambridge crew; but the question that



THE OXFORD CREW AFTER THE RACE.

arises is whether the fault lay in himself or in the inability of the others to back him up? They were undoubtedly stale, and when that is the case it is a very easy matter to blame stroke, in whom, nevertheless, there may be no fault whatever. Altogether, then, although the race was somewhat of a disappointment, it did not impair the reputation of this event as one of the fairest trials of strength and skill to be witnessed in England. We are glad to see that it still commands spectators as scarcely anything else in sport does, with the exception of the Derby. The public have a rooted and justifiable belief that here at least is one contest in which victory goes to those who deserve it. No suspicion of unfair play, no thought that the result can be discounted beforehand, ever enters the mind of the ordinary onlooker. It is believed, and with truth, that this annual struggle between the two Universities is an absolutely genuine affair from beginning to end, and thoroughly unspoiled by the influences that have cast their dark shadow over other forms of sport.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE reissue of Mr. Rigg's translation of the *Decameron* (Routledge) naturally gives rise to a certain amount of reflection on the character of the short stories, in the construction of which Boccaccio is the acknowledged master. It is an art that seems to have gone out of fashion. What we call short stories nowadays, or what is printed in the various magazines under that title, are for the most part either mere sketches, or snippets out of novels. The modern craftsman in reality has no time to write artistic short stories. At the beginning he has a choice of two fates; if he should have the ill-luck not to hit the popular fancy then he is condemned to turn out copy in great quantities at a low price, so that it is only a matter of time till he becomes the commonest of hacks. We assume for the purpose of the argument that he is the possessor of great talent, if not of positive genius. But the other alternative is almost less desirable than the former. Should he in the early part of his career meet with what is called a popular success, then every possible means will be taken to make him write to such an extent that art is no longer a possibility. There are agents who will clamour to serve him, and will go about raising his price per thousand words in the spirit of auctioneers. Magazines and publishers will compete against one another for his work, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the temptation to empty the gold mine open at his feet will overcome in him the finer ambition with which he set out. In nothing does all this hold more absolutely true than in regard to the short story. There are few men who are capable of producing more than two or three of these compositions in the course of a year, and, of course, when they are turned out monthly, weekly, or even daily, the quality is bound to deteriorate. That there is no exaggeration in what we say will be evident to anyone who tries to remember how few are the really immortal short stories in the literature of the world. Sir Walter Scott in "Wandering Willie's Tale" has left us one. Apuleius in "Cupid and Psyche," which he probably stole from some early Greek author, has sent one more down the ages. But to Boccaccio we owe more than to any other writer of the kind; and if proof were wanting of the difficulty of its achievement, it would be found in the extent to which men of genius have taken him as a model, or actually adapted his stories. Geoffrey Chaucer found in him a mine of wealth, and the best of the "Canterbury Tales" are those which were, with little change, taken from his pages. It were needless to enumerate the many other English writers who have found their inspiration in this Italian. Objection has often been taken to his coarseness, but this in reality is, to use a colloquial phrase, one of the defects of his qualities. There are writers of high poetic genius whom we could not imagine touching the subjects which he liked to revel in. We have, for example, his great and austere contemporary Dante, whose vision and faculty divine impelled him ever to what was greatest and most sublime in human life and hope and endeavour. Almost the same words might be applied to John Milton or even to Virgil. But, on the other hand, some of the greatest writers who have ever lived appear to have strained themselves to lay hold of the crude, gross, homely facts of life. They seem determined to lie under no sentimental delusion, and in regard to the passion of love itself, their sense of humour finds something ridiculous in the conventionalities under which it has been masked for ages. It is not by any means that they are incapable of understanding and representing a pure, noble, and hopeless passion. The finest of all the short stories written by Boccaccio was as perfectly pure in thought and rendering as any work constructed by human ingenuity. So it is with other writers of the same time. Chaucer evidently delighted in the humours of grossness, but that was, as it were, only during his moments of relaxation; when in earnest, love, in his hands, becomes the most refined and purified feeling. But a still better example is at hand in Shakespeare himself. It has often been urged against the national poet of England that he has a distinct leaning to coarseness, and there is scarcely a play in which some evidence of it may not be found; yet it springs only from his instinctive desire to understand the facts of life as they really are. No heroine of a modern novel would use the language, or confess to the thoughts, which found expression in the mouths of Shakespeare's most engaging women—women who have been loved by many succeeding generations, and we hope will continue to be. Yet, in the well-known soliloquy beginning "Gallop apace ye fiery-footed steeds," Juliet uses the most uncompromising language; so does Rosalind in many a casual speech. We have to remember, however, that the absolute purity and delicacy of these women is never brought into doubt, whatever we may think of the language they use. When the mind of Ophelia is unhinged, she sings scraps of folk-lore song that would give an unspeakable shock to a middle-class family of to-day. It is of course usual to say that we must make allowance for the lapse of time, as though people had grown more refined with the ages. It is to be feared, however, that much of this so-called refinement is external only. Centuries do not appear to effect any noteworthy change in human nature. However, all that is by the way. It merely serves to give Boccaccio his true place among what we may call the more earthy writers; that is to say, beside Rabelais, La Fontaine, Chaucer, Fielding, and those who are like them. It shows where he went for his material, but his distinction arose not so much from that as from the use to which he put his matter. And this brings us to a consideration of what a short story should be as opposed to a long novel. The latter, when the work of genius, is a kind of world in itself; its merit lies in the steady unfolding of character, and in the ingenuity of the author who contrives that one force after another should beat upon the mind he is analysing, so that eventually its defects and qualities should be as fully exposed as is that of a familiar friend. And, indeed, the notable characters of fiction are our familiar friends. We know Squire Western and Sir John Falstaff, and Jonathan Oldbuck and Arthur Pendennis as we know few of the people we meet every day. We understand their changes of mood and temper, and feel as if we had lived with them under many variations of circumstance. But in a short story all this is not possible, and the author who attempts it comes to grief. Beautifully done, it consists of only a single episode, or a single collision of character against character, a single suggestive phase in life. In "Wandering Willie's Tale" we have a supernatural incident touched, needless to say, with a hand so light and cunning that we know not in the end whether the author be laughing at a superstition or a believer in it. In Boccaccio's story of the "Hawk" we have a single incident that an unimaginative man might treat as a very slight incident in life, yet it is a key to unlock the secret of a fine love and a noble character. Never elsewhere in literature was so great an effect produced by such slight and delicate machinery. Those who have the ambition to write short stories might with advantage give their days and nights to ponder over the fine art shown by Boccaccio in this composition.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BIRMINGHAM WATERWORKS AND THE WYE FISHERY BOARD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In your issue of March 25th an article appeared on the above subject by Mr. Willis Bund. In this article he severely criticised the action of the chairman of the Wye Board, in agreeing on certain terms to surrender 7,000,000 gals. out of the 27,000,000 gals. of compensation water, which the Corporation of Birmingham is bound to send down from their new reservoirs in the Elan Valley. It is to be regretted that the chairman of one board should thus attack the chairman of another board upon a subject on which he is evidently not well informed, and upon which, therefore, he is not in a position to sit in judgment. He says: "All the local bodies who were interested in or connected with the Wye rose up in arms against the proposal, and at last the Wye Fishery Board declined to follow their chairman in the surrender of the rights that Parliament had secured for the river." As a matter of fact, at one of their meetings in the autumn, the Wye Board, after hearing the chairman's explanation of his reasons for thinking it advisable to do so, approved the agreement with the Birmingham Corporation; and it was the chairman himself who moved at a subsequent meeting that the Corporation be requested to withdraw the clauses dealing with the compensation water from their Bill. The agreement with the Corporation recognised fully that the interest of the Wye Board was not the only interest concerned, and it was provided that the consent of all other bodies interested should be obtained if possible. When it became evident that owing chiefly to the exaggerated statements put forward by a few individuals, as to the effect of reducing the compensation water, the local authorities interested not only would not agree to, but would actively oppose, the water clauses in the Birmingham Bill, the chairman of the Wye Board at once recognised that it was undesirable to proceed further with the proposal, and accordingly he moved the resolution to which I have alluded above. Mr. Willis Bund goes on to ask, "Can, then, one of the bodies who are interested in the river for its own purposes sell or get rid of any part of those rights? The

Wye authorities said 'Yes,' and agreed to do so, but surely this is a most dangerous doctrine. After hearing all parties, Parliament, as the supreme tribunal, has said the various interests on the river require so much compensation water. This should be fixed, and it should be impossible for any one of the interests to sell part of the common property for their individual benefit." He here argues as though the Corporation of Birmingham and the Wye Board had some power of their own to alter what Parliament has deliberately fixed, and writes of this as though it were a serious danger, to avoid the risk of which some legislative remedy should be provided. But surely it is quite obvious that neither the Corporation of Birmingham, nor the Wye Board, can do anything to alter the original decision of Parliament, except by obtaining the consent of Parliament to an amendment of its former Act, and that consent can only be obtained after full notice given and after an enquiry before a Parliamentary Committee, where all parties would be heard, and the question decided on its merits. Where, then, is this great danger which so alarms Mr. Willis Bund? He is also evidently unaware of the reasons which induced the Wye Board to agree to the proposal of the Corporation, and of the scheme which they had in view in the interests of the preservation of salmon in the Wye, and of scientific research and observation in connection with them. And whilst giving him credit for a thorough knowledge of the circumstances and requirements of the fisheries of the river Severn, over whose Board of Conservators he so ably presides, I venture to suggest that his knowledge of the special circumstances and difficulties of preserving salmon in the upper waters of the Wye, and of the scheme which the chairman of the Wye Board and his colleagues had in view in making the agreement they did, is evidently much too limited to justify his passing judgment upon their action, as he has thought fit to do in your columns.—A MEMBER OF THE WYE BOARD.

[The letter of our correspondent, "A Member of the Wye Board," seems to us in no way to alter the position which Mr. Willis Bund has taken up. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the scheme put forward by the Wye Board "in the interests of the preservation of salmon in the Wye, and of scientific research and observation in connection with them," justified the sale by the Wye Board to Birmingham of 7,000,000gal. of compensation water for £8,000, the question raised is, Are the Wye Board justified in agreeing to this against the wishes of the other parties interested in the river? Our correspondent seems to ignore that the Wye is a tributary of the Severn, and any permanent injury to the Wye, either in the amount of water or the stock of fish, might be a serious injury to the Severn. The question is really twofold; first, as to all interests on the Wye, exclusive of fish, can the Fishery Board injuriously affect them without their consent? Mr. Willis Bund says No; the compensation fixed by Parliament is for all the interests, not for one alone. This point our correspondent does not touch. Secondly, if two rivers flow into an estuary, can the Fishery Board of the one river agree to alter the condition of things without consulting the Fishery Board of the other? This again, in his article, Mr. Bund denies. We should be glad if our correspondent would give us full details of the scheme which, he says, justified the chairman of the Wye Board and his colleagues making an agreement to give up so large a share of compensation water.—ED.]

A WEEK-END COTTAGE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was much interested in your description of "A Week-End Cottage," as altered and repaired, until I discovered that the kitchen, with bed and bath rooms over, as shown in the plan, is entirely omitted in the sketch elevations, while the yard with outbuildings is shown as a continuation of, instead of at a right angle to, the building. Of course, the quick-set hedge as described and drawn (in quite a different direction to the old fence) would require at least twenty years' growth, or so I calculate. As this must puzzle many readers besides myself, may I ask if there is any explanation, or if the whole thing is an imagination of what might or is to be done?—S. SNELGROVE.

[Our contributor writes: "The restoration has been carried out in the old part of the cottage substantially, as shown by the plans. The additions indicated on the plans were proposed but not carried out, but an extension was made in the low outbuildings shown in the two perspective drawings, containing the small places indicated in the detached building, which is given with the plans. What is described as pantry on the latter is used as kitchen and scullery. There is confusion in your correspondent's remarks about the hedges, for these are accurately drawn from their existing condition."—ED.]

COUNTRY COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In India and China, where I have served for thirty years, we have country clubs. For instance, at Calcutta, Shanghai, etc., members of the club have the use of quarters, which are built or rented in suitable positions out in the country, to which they can drive for lunch, sports, etc., or stay for a pleasant change. There seems to be a general demand in this country for quiet country quarters in different neighbourhoods, termed health resorts. This demand may possibly be a result of the development of country hotels on the lines of large London hotels, with their bands, winter gardens, etc. However, there are very many who would prefer a more real country experience than that of a duplicate of London life. It would seem, therefore, that there is a demand for the formation of a country club, with the object of establishing quiet, comfortable cottages, where members would have the right of residence on favourable terms. Once started, its scope could be extended as called for.—REST AND CHANGE.

WHAT TO DO WITH A BARN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am much interested in seeing the drawing of the Ashurst Cottage Laundry in COUNTRY LIFE of February 4th last. I have an old barn which I am anxious to convert into cottages for coachman and gardener, laundry, and wash-house, as the gardener's wife is to undertake the laundry of the house. I am venturing to send a rough plan of the barn, the outline of one part of which, you will see, somewhat resembles the Ashurst sketch. I want to have earth-closets, fuel-house, etc., under the roof of this building, as there is ample space for them, and they would not look well outside. The roof will have to be entirely renewed. If you could kindly give me any hints as to the conversion of this barn, through the medium of your paper, I shall be very grateful. I shall be glad of any advice or suggestions under the *nom de plume* of—DORSET.

[We have referred this to our contributor, who replies as follows: "Your correspondent 'Dorset' hardly gives sufficient information regarding the character of the barn he proposes to convert. To give any special hints beyond those contained in my article, of much use to him, it would be necessary for me to have photographs taken from all four sides of the barn, with plans showing thicknesses and material of the walls, quality of the foundations, and a section or two giving the heights of the walls and present roof. In fact, it would be almost necessary for one to see the actual building before forming any opinion as to the best means of converting it to your correspondent's needs."—ED.]

ATTRACTING SWALLOWS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I shall be much obliged if you can inform me of any means likely to attract swallows and martins to build on a house.—WILLIAM TEMPLE.

[Swallows are usually hard put to it to find suitable nesting sites, and would probably soon find and appropriate any that were provided. But, unfortunately, in addition to the primary essentials of such a site—namely, a support upon which the saucer-like nest can be placed under weather-proof cover—the absence of sparrows seems to be a *sine quâ non*, and this is difficult to arrange about a house now that we no longer build wide crooked chimneys. As for martins, it is very possible that an old nest or two carefully removed from some other site and cemented to suitable corners would attract the attention of some returning young birds of last year, who have as yet no nesting sites of their own. The bottoms of the nests should be knocked out, however, to prevent the sparrows from occupying them.—ED.]

BIRDS AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—*Apropos* of the reference made in your article on "The Plague of Dogfish" to many wild birds being affected by any artificial light seen at night, a friend relates the fact of a robin breaking into song in the hedgerow of a country lane in such circumstances. By some people his statement to this effect was received with incredulity. Perhaps some of your readers may have had a similar experience.—F. E. W.

WHO ARE THE POISONERS?

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Yesterday afternoon our pretty white Persian cat, the pet of all the household, was well, and playing happily upon the lawn; an hour later she lay writhing, quivering, and screaming out her life in mortal agony. A year or two ago, a valuable Yorkshire terrier, my faithful little friend and companion, was poisoned in the self-same way, and died after cruel suffering, and many of our neighbours have also lost their pets. Now, who are the poisoners? Gamekeepers, careless or malicious persons—I know not which; but this I know, that poison is an ugly word and poisoning an ugly habit to fall into, and I cannot but think that he who could wilfully inflict such dreadful torture upon an unoffending animal would, if he wanted to, feel small compunction in using the same means to remove a fellow-creature. In days of old, Englishmen were noted for their truth, honour, and nobility. Times are changed when an Englishman can commit a treacherous deed like this and is too mean and cowardly to avow it.—H. C.

ALMOND BLOSSOM AND AARON'S ROD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—While admiring the beautiful arrangement of the almond blossom on a tree, with its flowers full of bees, and distributed not only on the young branches, but also on short spikes projecting from the large boughs, I noticed that there were at least thirty of last year's fruits, in cases which had dried and withered, but had only partly opened, still on the tree, among the buds and the blossoms. Under the tree were many more almonds, which had only recently dropped. The fruit was just as good to eat as that brought from abroad, perhaps because of the great thickness of the nut. But what struck me more was the curious parallel with the Old Testament account of Aaron's rod, which "budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." There is no mention of leaves, for the buds and blossoms appear before the leaves do, and these with the last year's fruit were all on the tree referred to together.—C. J. C.

A ROCK CRYSTAL EWER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The small rock crystal ewer with silver-gilt mounts, of the period of Elizabeth, for which Messrs. Duveen gave the handsome price of £4,000, measures barely 6in. in height, excluding the minute knob. It is without hall-marks, the work being perhaps too small in scale and delicate in detail to afford space for a maker's mark, while if made for a Royal person, or even one of the Court, no stamp would be needed, plate for the use of exalted personages being exempt from duty. A bird scratched upon a somewhat indistinct shield inside the neck was, perhaps, placed there by the maker. The details of the work and certain points of resemblance between it and the large agate ewer belonging to the Duke of Rutland, made in 1579, favour the idea that it is of English make. The crystal is cut to a pear shape, with plain longitudinal facets, the neck somewhat cylindrical, and divided from the body by a half-round fillet. The cover is domed and of crystal, surmounted by a minute knob, turned and chased. The mounts to the cover and to the neck of the vase and foot are embossed with fruits, and these and the smaller borders and mouldings are characteristic of fine English work of Elizabethan date.



ELIZABETHAN EWER.

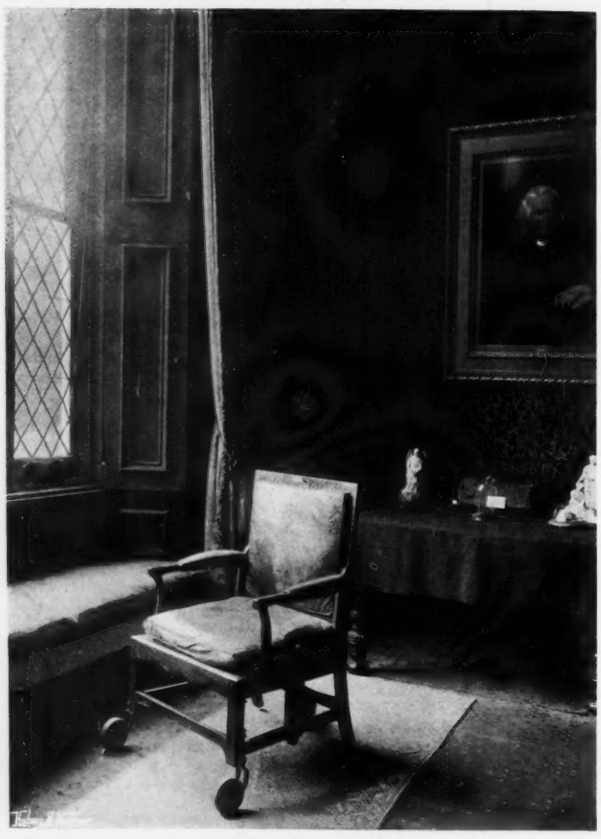
Around the neck are four pendant garlands of fruit and foliage, and there are four terminal figures, hinged, connecting a central band with the foot. These are feminine, and end in long, forked, intertwined tails, scaled, very like those of the upper series of the Rutland ewer. The handle is finely scrolled, and is fashioned as a torso, male, also ending in long forked tails intertwined, a form known in Italy and Germany, but seen also in English work, such as the Rutland ewer, and that of Sidney Sussex College. So far it might be a model in miniature of a finely-worked English ewer; but the spout is entirely exceptional, and of foreign inspiration. It rises from near the base of the vessel, and takes the form of an animal's head on a long, scaled, slightly-tapering neck. Such spouts are reminiscences of mediæval days, and spouted ewers of metal appear to have been produced abroad, especially in Eastern Europe, long after they ceased to be so in England.—J. S. GARDNER.

SOME COWPER RELICS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph is a picture of the identical chest of drawers belonging to and described by William Cowper, in his poem on "The Retired Cat." This

"Poet's cat, sedate and grave
As poet well could wish to have,
Was much addicted to inquire
For nooks to which she might retire.
. . . . .
A drawer impending o'er the rest,
Half open in the topmost chest,
Of depth enough and none to spare,
Invited her to slumber there.
Puss, with delight beyond expression,
Survey'd the scene and took possession.
. . . . .
She left the cares of life behind,
And slept as she would sleep her last,
When in came, housewifely inclin'd,
The chambermaid, and shut it fast."



THE POET'S CHAIR

Evening came, the night followed, day passed,

"The evening grey again ensued,
And puss came into mind no more
Than if entomb'd the day before."

At last the pressing calls of hunger grew unbearable, and during the second night of her incarceration a scratching sound inside the chest riveted the poet's attention. This was followed by

"a voice he well knew,
A long and melancholy mew.
He 'gan in haste the drawers t' explore,
The lowest first, and without stop,
The rest in order to the top.
For 'tis a truth well known to most,
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it ere it come to light
In every cranny but the right."

So pussy was released from the prison of her own choice, and we are not surprised to learn that in future she preferred as

"a place of rest,
Anything rather than a chest."

Although Cowper implies that his cat was peculiar in her choice of strange "nooks to which she might retire," instancing not only the open drawer, but a far less comfortable spot where sometimes she

"her ease and solace sought
In an old empty watering-pot,"

the writer is inclined to think that all cats have a like proclivity. One she knew—but this was in Ireland—had a fancy still more peculiar, and invariably chose the coachman's hat for kittening purposes. The second photograph shows the poet's favourite wheeled chair. It is neither beautiful nor does it appear a model of comfort, but about it lingers a halo of romance. Seated in it, this strange, melancholy man found temporary distraction from his sad hallucinations in watching the gambols of his pet hares, which by kindness and gentleness he had trained to be his companions. He thus alludes to one of these favourites who had lived with him nine years:

"I kept him for his humour's sake,
For he would oft beguile
My heart of thoughts that made it ache,
And force me to a smile."

These interesting relics of the poet Cowper belong to Mr. H. Longuet-Higgins of Turvey Abbey, Bedfordshire, whose ancestors were the poet's friends.—E. BROUGHTON.



A COWPER RELIC

VEGETARIANISM.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I read your notice of the Bromley Vegetarian Hospital with much interest. As Sir Henry Thompson said, we "eat our diseases." You evidently speak as a spectator who has not played the game, and may be willing to hear the opinion of one who has been a vegetarian for nearly two years. I am too fond of the gun to be a sentimentalist, and took to the new "fad" purely for the sake of health. I cannot enter into the medical argument here, but I think that all true lovers of Nature would be glad to live on "the kindly fruits of the earth," and be independent of the butcher, whose trade is only justified by its supposed necessity, were they not deterred by the notion that abstinence from meat must mean loss of strength. It has been abundantly proved in Germany that a meatless diet gives greater powers of endurance, and, personally, I am stronger both in body and brain. I believe thousands of vegetarians can say the same. It is also frequently claimed that drunkards lose their craving for alcohol when put on a fleshless diet. The only warning necessary is that meat must be replaced by an adequate substitute. A potato and cabbage diet means a breakdown. My own includes brown bread, eggs, milk, cheese, honey, almonds and chestnuts, cereals, pulses, and fruits and vegetables generally. There is now plenty of good literature on the subject, and vegetarian restaurants are becoming quite common; but if any of your readers would like further details of "the simple life," I shall be happy to supply them.—CORVUS FRUGILEGUS.

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